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ABSTRACT

The test development plan described here is an outgrowth of a 3-year California state project to address the English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) placement needs of adult education agencies in the state. The test development plan provides specific directions for the development of operational instruments anchored to the state's standards, and includes a recommended placement process for the standards and general guidelines for whole test and reading, writing, and listening item development. An introductory section describes the placement process and guidelines, and outlines detailed reading, writing, and listening specifications. Appended materials include a list of working group members, criteria for estimating the range and discrimination point of prototype reading and listening items, examples of reading/writing text adaptation, sample responses for generate writing tasks, and rater training procedures for scoring generate writing tasks. Contains 7 references. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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ED 423 715

California Department of Education

Adult English-as-a-Second-Language
Assessment Project

**Test Development Plan
with Specifications for Placement Instruments
Anchored to the Model Standards**

Frances A. Butler, Sara Cushing Weigle,
Andrea B. Kahn, and Edynn Y. Sato

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This test development plan is the result of the collective efforts of a group of committed professionals and is the culmination of three years of work addressing the English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) placement needs of adult education agencies in California. The work was carried out under the auspices of the Adult Education Policy and Planning Unit of the California Department of Education (CDE) and would not have been possible without the foresight of Dr. Raymond Eberhard who recognized the need for appropriate assessments to be used with the California *English-as-a-Second-Language Model Standards for Adult Education Programs* (California Department of Education, 1992).

The members of the CDE Adult ESL Assessment Working Group were our enthusiastic partners throughout the project. We could not have accomplished the work without their active participation at every stage. Each year they orchestrated test administrations at their agencies and willingly provided feedback and input whenever asked. The success of this project is proof of how researchers and practitioners can collaborate effectively in the accomplishment of a common goal.

A special thank you is extended to the ESL teachers and students at the 13 agencies across the state represented by the working group members. Their participation in the project was extremely critical to the work. The willingness of the teachers to allow us to try out items with their students and the willingness of the students to take the "exercises" and then talk about them provided us with essential feedback about what was working and what was not.

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Introduction

The test development plan described in this document is an outgrowth of a three-year effort supported by the California Department of Education (CDE) to address the English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) placement needs of adult education agencies in the state.¹ The plan includes text and item specifications for reading, writing, and listening and is intended for use by a test development team to guide the production of instruments appropriate for placing students into levels defined by the California *English-as-a-Second-Language Model Standards for Adult Education Programs* (California Department of Education, 1992).² The work which led to this test development plan was carried out at the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation in collaboration with an ESL Assessment Working Group.³ (See Appendix A for the list of working group members.) The final project reports for the three years of work (1992-1995) describe in detail the tasks undertaken each year (Butler, Weigle, & Sato, 1993; Weigle, Kahn, Butler, & Sato, 1994; Kahn, Butler, Weigle, & Sato, 1995).

The test development plan provides specific direction for the development of operational instruments anchored to the Model Standards and includes a recommended placement process for use with the Model Standards and general guidelines for item and whole test development. The specifications for the development of reading, writing, and listening items follow in the colored pages.

¹Henceforth in this document, adult education agency or agencies in California will be referred to as "agency" or "agencies."

²Henceforth in this document, the *English-as-a-Second-Language Model Standards for Adult Education Programs* will be referred to as the Model Standards. There are seven proficiency levels designated in the Model Standards: beginning literacy, beginning low (BL), beginning high (BH), intermediate low (IL), intermediate high (IH), advanced low (AL), and advanced high (AH). The Adult ESL Assessment Project addresses placement only into levels beginning low through advanced high.

³Henceforth in this document, the ESL Assessment Working Group will be referred to as the working group. The working group, which was supported by the CDE, consisted of one representative from each of thirteen agencies in California and played an active, vital role in the project work. (See Butler, Weigle, & Sato, 1993, pp. 3-4, for a detailed explanation of the role of the working group.)

Placement Process for Model Standards Levels

In order to develop item specifications that match not only the content of the Model Standards but the needs of adult education agencies, a placement process was drafted in collaboration with the working group. Two overriding issues in placement testing led to the development of the placement process: 1) the need for group-administered tests that could be easily scored and 2) the difficulty of attempting placement into six levels with only one instrument. The three-tiered process, presented schematically in Figure 1, addresses both issues and provides the operational context for the instruments that will be produced from the specifications in this document. Key features of the process are discussed below.

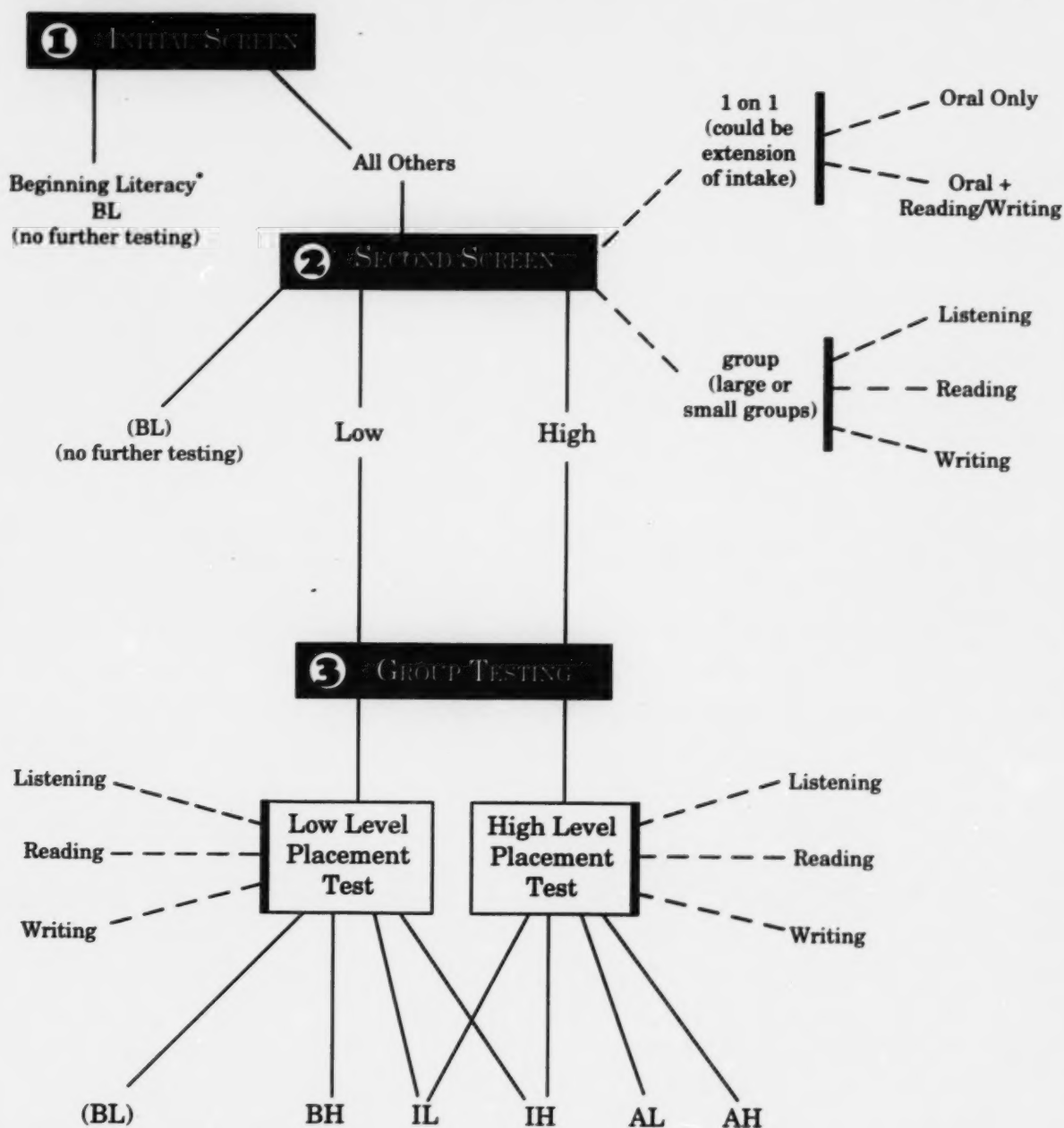
An initial screen identifies beginning literacy and beginning low students.

Most agencies already conduct some form of intake interview for administrative purposes and often use this process to identify those students with minimal or no literacy or oral skills. These students are usually placed immediately into beginning literacy or beginning low and no further testing is required. Inclusion of the intake interview as an initial screen serves to formalize its function in the overall placement process.

A second screen directs students to either low- or high-level testing.

The second screen is intended to be a quick procedure to make gross distinctions between lower and higher proficiency students. It will identify additional beginning low students, who will not be required to undergo further testing, and will direct all other students to appropriate low- or high-level placement tests. In order to accommodate varying agency needs, the second screen will be agency specific in terms of format and skill area focus. Some agencies may decide to use a group-administered screening test which could involve listening, reading, or writing, while others may prefer to make the second screen an extension of the intake interview (initial screen) by including a few oral questions, a short reading passage, or a simple writing task.

Figure 1
ESL Placement Process



*There are seven proficiency levels designated in the Model Standards: beginning literacy, beginning low (BL), beginning high (BH), intermediate low (IL), intermediate high (IH), advanced low (AL), and advanced high (AH).

Final placement decisions are based on low- and high-level instruments.

Since most beginning low students will be identified by the first or second screen, low-level instruments will be used primarily to place students into beginning high, intermediate low, and intermediate high. High-level instruments will place students into intermediate low, intermediate high, advanced low, and advanced high. An important feature of this process is that both low- and high-level instruments will allow for placement into the intermediate levels should the second screen fail to direct a student to the most appropriate level test.

The specifications in this document are intended to guide the development of instruments for use at this final stage of placement. Low-level instruments are designated as Level A and high-level instruments as Level B. The Level A and Level B instruments will include some combination of listening, reading, and writing items, since these skill areas are most amenable to group testing.

Guidelines for Test Development

The test development process recommended here is iterative; the items and the texts on which they are based must be revisited at every stage as new data help clarify how the items are working with the target population. The key steps in the process are highlighted and then discussed.

Assemble a test development team.

This first step is necessary to ensure the development of quality instruments. A core team should be assembled which includes experts with experience in language testing, ESL instruction, and at least one person with psychometric expertise to analyze test results so that data can be effectively evaluated. The core team will oversee the test development process. Responsibilities will include completing the specifications, establishing and carrying out a text and item review process, training item writers, small- and large-scale testing, data analysis, developing and implementing a plan for whole test construction, conducting validity studies, and monitoring cutoff scores for placement.

Constitute an advisory committee.

The core test development team should meet regularly with an advisory committee consisting of one or more language testing experts and several representatives from agencies in California who will administer the tests once they are available. Language testing experts will provide input on further development of the specifications, on the plan for whole test construction, and on issues of reliability and validity. Continued input from agency representatives will help verify the content and language appropriateness of texts and associated items and determine what is feasible operationally given the realities of individual agency situations.

Review and complete the specifications in this document.

This document includes specifications for developing reading, writing, and listening items appropriate for placing adult ESL students into Model Standards proficiency levels. The specifications are a result of the prototyping effort undertaken in the third year of project work⁴ in which preliminary assessment models were developed for text types and skills abstracted from the Model Standards and identified by the working group as critical for placement. While the specifications are comprehensive in that item types were developed for most of the skills identified,⁵ the item types presented here are by no means exhaustive. The core team is encouraged to experiment with additional item types that seem promising using new source material.⁶

It is also important to note that the reading and writing specifications are more fully developed than the listening specifications. This is due in part to the reading and writing skills being more fully articulated than the listening skills in the Model Standards. With reading and writing, the move from the Model Standards to test items was direct and clear which

⁴Prototyping refers to the development of preliminary assessment models that serve as examples for item writers. The prototyping process is iterative and involves items being drafted, tried out, reviewed, revised, and tried out again. Once the items have been tested on a large scale and have undergone final revision, they become part of the item specifications and serve as models for producing operational assessments.

⁵Item types were not developed for the reading skill Make Inferences because the texts selected did not lend themselves to assessing this skill.

⁶New item types must go through a prototyping process that parallels the one used in developing the prototype items in these specifications. (See Kahn et al., 1995, for a description of the process.)

facilitated the abstraction of skills and the definition of underlying constructs. It also aided in the verification process in which working group members matched proposed skill definitions to Model Standards objectives. With listening the move from the Model Standards was more complicated because of the difficulty in defining underlying constructs and verifying their match to the Model Standards. (See Kahn et al., 1995, for discussion.) In addition, small-scale tryouts with listening items could only be conducted on a limited basis given the inherent logistical difficulties in obtaining quality recordings of texts, associated items, and directions. Thus the combined lack of specificity in the Model Standards and the logistical complexities associated with testing listening impacted what could feasibly be accomplished.

Because the specifications have not yet been used to generate new items, they must be carefully reviewed and, where necessary, completed by the core team. Once the existing specifications have been completed and reviewed, they should be used by the core team to produce initial operational items and a procedure for training outside item writers should be developed. It is important to emphasize that specifications are dynamic and must be periodically reviewed and revised as needed as feedback regarding their effectiveness is received from item writers.

Identify and train item writers to use the completed specifications.

Once a complete set of specifications is available, potential item writers can be identified and trained. Item writers should be familiar with the adult ESL population and with the Model Standards. Background in these two areas will facilitate the selection of appropriate material for text and item development. A training session should take potential item writers through the specifications and should cover such issues as 1) text selection, including appropriate and inappropriate sample texts, 2) procedures for adapting authentic texts and producing original texts if necessary, and 3) item type appropriateness in relation to skill, text type, and level. Training should include practice drafting items and critiquing them as a group. Following the training, potential items writers should be asked to submit a sample set that includes a text and associated items for review by the core team to determine whether a person shows promise as an item writer.

Identify potential texts, adapt if necessary, and submit for review.

Core team members or item writers who select texts should indicate the intended target level of each text and the types of items that might accompany it. An internal review process must be established to assure that potential texts meet selection criteria. As part of that process, at least two members of the core team should independently review every text submitted for consideration. Approval forms should be developed to help systematize the review process. If there is disagreement about appropriateness, a third member of the core team should review the text. After a text has been approved internally, it should be given to at least two advisory committee members from adult agencies and an outside language testing expert for review. Once a text has received final approval, it goes to item writers for item development.

Draft test items and submit for review.

As many items as possible should be drafted for each approved text to allow for item loss as a result of poor performance during pre- and pilot testing. Items should be reviewed by the core team and one or two advisory committee members in a process that parallels the text review process. Once the items are approved for pretesting, item sets should be assembled for each text and appropriate directions drafted.

Conduct initial small-scale tryouts.

Initial small-scale tryouts at appropriate levels are critical to determining whether the items and directions as formulated are comprehensible for the test taker. This phase, referred to as pretesting, provides the first opportunity to assess the appropriateness of the text and associated items for the target levels with test takers. Pretesting also allows for an initial indication of the amount of time needed for students to work through a text and accompanying items and for the identification of problems such as wording, familiarity with response formats, and task clarity. With writing tasks, the pretesting phase also shows whether a given prompt will elicit a ratable sample.

A number of texts and associated items can be pretested at the same time even though they may not be intended for the same form of a test. The goal of pretesting is to collect information at the task and item level that will

inform revisions prior to large-scale tryouts. With some texts and associated items, a single pretest administration will provide the necessary information for revision, with others it may be necessary to pretest and revise several times within operational parameters (e.g., cost issues and access to students). The intent is to be able to conduct large-scale tryouts with sets of items that are as strong as possible.

Conduct large-scale testing.

Items should be revised based on pretesting results and large-scale testing should be conducted. This phase, referred to as pilot testing, involves the administration of the items to a large number of students across an appropriate range of levels so that, in addition to revisiting content issues, statistical analyses can be run to determine whether the items are performing as expected for placement purposes. The data obtained from pilot testing efforts allow for further revision and refinement of items and provide further indications of the estimated range of the items as well as the points at which the items best discriminate.⁷

Appendix B provides the criteria used in the prototyping effort to assess the estimated range and discrimination point for reading and listening items. These criteria serve as a point of departure for establishing criteria for operational tests. It will be important to remember that with operational tests, criteria must be carefully monitored over time to determine accuracy and effectiveness of application, particularly as agencies continue to fine-tune their alignment with the Model Standards. A process for aggregating data across agencies in California will be essential for assuring refinement of the criteria vis-à-vis the Model Standards levels.

Develop a whole-test construction plan.

The design of a whole test is influenced by two primary sets of issues: content considerations and operational constraints. Content considerations include skill area focus, sampling of skills, and variety of topic and item formats. Operational constraints include administration time, mode of delivery, and scoring procedures.

⁷The estimated range indicates the proficiency levels at which an item seems most appropriate in terms of content and performance. The discrimination point indicates the two adjacent levels where an item seems to best differentiate student performance.

For this test development effort, the following whole-test decisions have already been made in conjunction with the working group regarding both content and operational issues.

1. Both Level A and Level B instruments will assess test taker ability in three skill areas—reading, writing, and listening—with reading and writing in one section and listening in another.
2. Placement decisions will be based on performance in all three skill areas, although tests will be constructed in such a way that separate scores can be reported for each area.
3. Sampling of skills within a given skill area will be based on recommendations found in the item specifications for reading, writing, and listening. The recommendations are a result of several meetings with working group members in which they were asked to prioritize skills for placement by indicating if a given skill was essential or optional for Level A and Level B tests. This information is presented on the overview page for each skill under Test Level.

Note: The recommendations found in the listening item specifications are based on preliminary discussions with the working group and will need to be systematically reviewed by the advisory committee.

4. There will be a variety of item formats (both constructed and selected response); however, an attempt will be made to limit the number of different formats within a given section of the test. Ease of scoring will be a primary consideration in assembling whole tests. Example items should be included as needed as well as warm-up items at the beginning of the listening section to orient the test taker to the aural modality. Neither example items nor warm-up items should be scored.

Assemble and pilot whole tests.

Assemble at least two forms of each test for pilot testing. Complete test forms must be pilot tested to determine how each instrument is performing as a whole test. Timing adjustments can be made if necessary to assure that examinees have ample time to complete the test. Acceptable levels of reliability must be established and initial cutoff ranges for placement estimated. In addition, further item-level analyses will guide revision.

An operational test must be monitored regularly to determine if cutoff ranges are allowing for effective placement decisions vis-à-vis course content. Over time it should be possible to adjust cutoffs so that students are being placed into classes appropriate for their language ability.

Establish validity of instruments.

Establishing the validity of an instrument is a critical part of any test development effort. Validity deals with whether an instrument is measuring what it purports to measure and is critical to assuring that decisions made on the basis of test performance are fair and equitable. Validity is always addressed with reference to a specific context and group of test takers. Thus, a test that is valid in one situation may not be valid in another.

There are several dimensions to validity and for any given test situation the dimensions which impact the overall validity of the instrument must be identified. In the current effort, construct, content, and face validity are all relevant. Construct validity relates to the effectiveness with which the language skill descriptions in the Model Standards have been captured by the specifications and the test items. Content validity deals with the extent to which the test items provide adequate and appropriate skill coverage to allow for an accurate assessment of student ability in reading, writing, and listening as described in the Model Standards. Face validity refers to perceptions on the part of test takers and score users about the match between test content and the skills and tasks emphasized in the Model Standards and taught in courses. Construct and content validity must be established for placement decisions to be accurate, and face validity must be assured so that practitioners and students feel confident about the placement decisions that are made.

Initial steps taken towards establishing the validity of the instruments to be produced from the specifications in this document are described below and include recommendations for additional steps to be taken.

1. Working group members began the validation process by systematically matching the categorization of text types and skills to the Model Standards skill area descriptors. Where there was lack of agreement, modifications were made to the text types and skills to more accurately

reflect the Model Standards content. Modifications underwent further review and consensus was reached.

This process was carried out and completed for reading and writing text types and skills, as well as listening text types. As discussed above, the investigation of the validity of listening skills proved to be more complicated. Due in part to time limitations, consensus was not reached, but the process led to several recommendations in the categorization and definition of listening skills which are reflected in the listening item specifications. To complete the process, however, these skills must be further reviewed and validated by the advisory committee.

2. Working group members also prioritized skills for placement by determining whether a given skill is essential, optional, or inappropriate⁸ on Level A and Level B tests based on the following primary considerations: (1) whether the skill is essential to determining a test taker's ability in a given skill area and (2) whether the skill can feasibly be assessed on a placement test given limited testing time and other operational constraints.

Item specifications were drafted for those skills identified as either essential or optional across all three skill areas, although skill prioritization for listening will need to be reviewed and validated by the advisory committee. A whole-test construction plan must assure adequate sampling across and within skill areas and the plan must be verified by the advisory committee.

3. All prototype texts and items were reviewed both internally and externally to assure text appropriateness and quality of items. In addition, prototypes were pretested and pilot tested at several agencies statewide and qualitative data in the form of questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations were collected from teachers, students, and administrators. Information gleaned from the qualitative data ensured that the texts and tasks were perceived as comprehensible, useful, and

⁸Essential skills are critical for placement and must be assessed on every form of the test. Optional skills are important but not critical for placement and need not be assessed on every form of the test. Inappropriate skills are not critical for placement and should not be assessed on any form of the test.

indicative of test taker ability. The process of obtaining input and feedback from these constituencies must continue as test items are developed.

4. Text and item specifications were reviewed by a language testing specialist to ensure overall clarity and coherence and to make sure each item type is appropriate for the skill being tested. These specifications must now be verified by the core test development team and the advisory committee.
5. As part of the item development process, various formats were pretested to control for the effect of testing method and determine the formats that are most effective for assessing specific skills. Item Type Notes provide details of specific instances.

Although validity is addressed in the final guideline of this section, it is important to stress that establishing validity is an ongoing process that begins in the initial stages and continues throughout the development of operational instruments. It will take the combined efforts of the core team and the advisory committee to assure the validity of the instruments to be produced.

What follows are the text and item specifications for reading, writing, and listening. Reading and writing tasks are integrated in that both are developed around the same source materials and are therefore presented together in the specifications. Listening is presented separately. A glossary of selected terms is included at the end of the specifications.

Reading and Writing Specifications

21

General Overview

The reading and writing specifications are divided into three sections:

- Reading/writing text specifications
- Reading item specifications
- Writing task specifications

Each section is organized as follows. First, there is an overview page which presents the general organization and defines critical terms used in the section. Then, specifications are presented including prototypes that exemplify the texts, items, or tasks being defined. A brief description of each section is provided below.

Reading/writing text specifications

Reading/writing text specifications include general guidelines for text selection and adaptation and specifications for the following text types abstracted from the Model Standards and validated for placement: Display, Paragraph, and Multi-paragraph Passage.

Reading item specifications

Reading item specifications are organized by skill. The following reading skills were abstracted from the Model Standards and validated for placement: Locate Specific Information, Draw Meaning, Extract and Combine Information, Interpret Relationships, and Make Inferences. For each skill, multiple item types are specified.

Writing task specifications

Writing task specifications are also organized by skill. The skill Generate was abstracted from the Model Standards and validated for placement.⁹ Four task types are specified for this skill and a description of holistic scoring procedures and rubrics is provided.

⁹The writing skills Copy and Complete were also abstracted from the Model Standards and validated for placement. However, it was decided in collaboration with the working group that it would be best to assess these skills at either the first or second tier of the placement process. Thus specifications for Copy and Complete are not included in this document.

Reading/Writing Text Specifications Overview

Text specifications are provided for the three reading/writing text types below.

- Display
- Paragraph
- Multi-paragraph passage

The text specifications are organized as follows. First, general guidelines for reading/writing text selection and adaptation are presented. Then, specifications for each text type are provided. The specifications include the following:

General description

A brief definition of the text type

Length

The recommended number of words

Number of items per text

The recommended number of test items associated with a text in an operational form of a test

Note: For a given text, as many items as possible should be drafted and pretested to generate a sufficient number of acceptable items for an operational form of the test.

Target level

The Model Standards proficiency levels at which a text is targeted

The target level of a text depends both on the text type and on the language in the text that must be interpreted to answer specific items. In order to assess a range of proficiency levels with a given text, the text should include vocabulary and structures targeted at several levels.

Language is defined as targeted at a given level when test takers at that level are presumed to be able to interpret the language, while test takers at the next lower level are not. For guidance on appropriate language forms for the proficiency levels, see Sentence Types and Verb Tenses, Model Standards, pp. 74-77.

Test level

An indication of whether the text type is appropriate for Level A tests or Level B tests

Skills

The reading skills that can be tested using the text type

Prototype text

A text that exemplifies the text type

All prototype texts were pilot tested in the form in which they are presented and were found to be promising as models for placement test development based on content considerations and feedback from teachers and students.

Prototype text notes

Explanatory notes about the prototype text that include a discussion of the text vis-à-vis the specified text attributes

Throughout the reading and writing specifications, texts are referred to as primary or secondary. These terms are defined below.

Primary text

The main text on which most reading items and writing tasks are based

A primary text is either a display, paragraph, or multi-paragraph passage (defined below).

Secondary text

A supplementary text related to the primary text and critical to some reading and writing task types

A secondary text is either an additional display or paragraph or a statement in the item stem which sets up a condition or a problem.

Text Selection and Adaptation

Reading/writing texts are either selected from existing materials and used in their original form or adapted from existing materials and reproduced. (See Appendix C for examples of original and adapted texts.) What follows are general guidelines that should be adhered to in producing all reading/writing texts.

1. All reading/writing texts should be selected from general content areas that are familiar to adult ESL students given their goals and experiences. General topics include but are not limited to shopping, banking, housing, health, transportation, current events, and community resources. Some common vocational topics such as employment and general workplace safety may also be appropriate.
2. Care must be taken to select topics that will not quickly become dated or one that critically depends on background knowledge of specific people or events.
3. The appropriateness of a text for a given level depends in part on factors such as familiarity of topic, visual aids, and complexity of content, vocabulary, or syntax, as specified in the Model Standards. All texts must be reviewed by content-area experts familiar with the Model Standards and the adult ESL population to evaluate their appropriateness for use at specific proficiency levels.
4. Adapted texts should be based on materials originally written for a general English-speaking audience and not for language learning or assessment purposes. A text should remain as close to its original format as possible, although the following adaptations may be made:
 - (a) Brand names, other proper nouns, addresses, and telephone numbers should be changed to avoid association with actual people, organizations, places, and so on.
 - (b) A text may be shortened or edited for simplicity and clarity, or to make a given item type possible. On a Level A text, the language may be simplified in places, as long as connected discourse retains a natural flow.
 - (c) Visuals may be added to help orient the test taker to the text. Existing visuals may be modified for clarity and simplicity.
5. Permission must be obtained to use a text, whether adapted or in original form, on an operational test. The source of the text must be acknowledged wherever it appears on all test forms.

Display

General description

A display is a text consisting of pieces of related information presented in words, phrases, sentences, and/or non-alphabetic forms (i.e., numerals or symbols) that are not connected into a single piece of discourse. A display may also contain visuals that orient the test taker to the content. Examples of displays include lists, menus, directories, indices, calendars, schedules, signs, labels, advertisements, forms, and tables.

Length

Between 20 and 75 words

Target level

Beginning low through intermediate high

Test level

Appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests

Number of items per text

Between two and six

Skills

Locate specific information

Extract and combine information (in conjunction with a secondary text)

Prototype text

Village Bike Shop

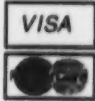
World Class Bicycles
Call: 257-2453

**WE SHIP
WORLDWIDE**

854 Ocean Blvd • Palm Village

- Bicycles for the entire family
- Free lifetime service plan with purchase of any bike
- All makes & models expertly serviced
- Quality selection of accessories & apparel
- Bicycle & exerciser rentals available

Free Parking Available
★ OPEN 7 DAYS ★



adapted from *Donnelly Yellow Pages*, Los Angeles, 1992

Prototype text notes

The display is an advertisement containing 47 words and eight pieces of non-alphabetic information (numbers and symbols). The example text is targeted primarily at the beginning levels, with some vocabulary targeted at the intermediate levels, and is thus appropriate for Level A tests.

Paragraph

General description

A paragraph is a series of related sentences (at least two, usually no more than five). Examples of paragraphs include notes or messages, brief public information notices, instructions, and short newspaper or magazine articles.

Length

Between 40 and 100 words

Target level

Beginning high through advanced high

Test level

Appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests

Number of items per text

Between two and four

Skills

Draw meaning
Extract and combine information
Interpret relationships
 cause/effect
 compare/contrast
 generalization/example
 main idea/supporting details
 sequence of events
Make inferences

Prototype text**Strange True Stories**

Police arrested James Haskell, seventeen, in March after he tried to buy beer at Wally's Mini-Mart by using a stolen driver's license—that of Douglas Cleaver. The man behind the counter at Wally's knew it was stolen because he is Douglas Cleaver, who had had his license taken in a truck break-in two months earlier. Haskell fled when he heard Cleaver talking to the police but left his wallet, which contained his real driver's license.

adapted from *The Los Angeles Reader*, June 2, 1994

Prototype text notes

The text is a short magazine article consisting of an 80-word paragraph that narrates a series of events. The example text is targeted primarily at the intermediate levels and is thus appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests.

Multi-Paragraph Passage

General description

A passage is a series of related paragraphs (at least two, usually no more than ten). Examples of passages include public information notices, letters, and newspaper or magazine articles.

Length

Between 100 and 375 words

Target level

Beginning high through advanced high

Test level

Appropriate for Level B tests only

Number of items per text

Between four and eight

Skills

- Draw meaning
- Extract and combine information
- Interpret relationships
 - cause/effect
 - compare/contrast
 - generalization/example
 - main idea/supporting details
 - sequence of events
- Make inferences

Prototype text**City News**

Thursday, June 23, 1994

**Person of the Week**

City News' Person of the Week is adult school student Oscar Rodriguez, whose dream came true last week when he received his high school diploma after six years of study at City Adult School.

Rodriguez said his primary motivation for graduating was his 17-year-old daughter, who becomes a high school senior this fall. "I wanted to have my diploma first," the 35-year-old student explained.

Rodriguez, who attended classes at the adult school to

learn English and become a U.S. citizen, accomplished two feats in one year: getting his high school diploma and being named Citizen of the Year by the State Consortium for Adult Education.

Rodriguez came to the United States 14 years ago from Guatemala. At that time, he felt no immediate need to learn English since the people he spent time with spoke primarily Spanish and he listened to Spanish radio and TV.

Later, he realized he needed to learn English in order to get his high school diploma. So, in 1988 he enrolled in City Adult School where he proved to be a very diligent and focused student. He found time to study and participate in community activities while working two jobs and raising a family.

According to Consortium president Gerry Delaney, "The adult school is full of students like Rodriguez who have many responsibilities, but Rodriguez

stands out because he always gets the job done with a smile and in a timely fashion." The Consortium acknowledged Rodriguez' accomplishments by giving him the Citizen of the Year award.

"I feel proud. I wanted to do this as an example for my kids," said Rodriguez, who has another daughter, age 7, and two sons, 15 and 10.

In fact, Rodriguez has set a good example not only at school but at work. Last year he was named Most Outstanding Employee at County Hospital where he works as a nurses' aide.

Receiving his diploma is only the first step to other ambitions for Rodriguez, who plans to continue his work in the medical field. "Now I want to go to college so I can become a nurse."

City News congratulates Oscar Rodriguez and wishes him continued success.

adapted from *Culver City News*, June 23, 1994

Prototype text notes

The text is a newspaper article consisting of 10 paragraphs (367 words) that tells about a local current event. The example text is targeted primarily at the advanced levels, with some vocabulary and structures targeted at the intermediate levels, and is thus appropriate for Level B tests.

Reading Item Specifications Overview

Item specifications are provided for the reading skills below.

- Locate specific information (LS)
- Draw meaning (DM)
- Extract and combine information (EC)
- Interpret relationships (IR)
- Make inferences (MI)¹⁰

For each skill, an introductory page provides the following information:

General description

A brief definition of the skill as operationalized in item types

Text type

The primary text (display, paragraph, or multi-paragraph passage) on which reading items are based

Target level

The Model Standards proficiency levels at which items testing the skill are targeted

An item is defined as being targeted at a given level when test takers at that level are presumed to be able to answer the item correctly while test takers at the next lower level are not.

The target level of an item is dependent on both the skill being tested and the language that must be interpreted (in the item stem, the primary text, or the secondary text) in order to answer the item.

¹⁰MI item types were not developed as part of the prototyping effort. Texts that lend themselves to assessing this skill need to be selected and item types developed following the prototyping process described in Kahn et al. (1995).

Test level

An indication of whether the skill is essential or optional for placement on Level A tests and Level B tests

Item types

A brief description of each item type testing the skill

The introductory page is followed by specifications for each item type associated with that skill. The specifications include the following information:

Item format

The format of the item type (multiple choice, select number correct, sequencing, unique answer)

Stimulus attributes

The characteristics of the input to the test taker, which include:

- (a) specific information about the primary text and, where appropriate, the secondary text
- (b) a detailed description of the item stem
- (c) an indication of where target-level language is found in the item

Response attributes

The characteristics of the response

For constructed response items, a detailed description of the expected response is provided.

For selected response items, the following are specified:

- (a) number of response options
- (b) characteristics of the key (correct option)
- (c) characteristics of the distractors (incorrect options)
- (d) language characteristics of the response options

Prototype item

An item that exemplifies the item type

Unless otherwise noted, all prototype items were pilot tested in the form in which they are presented and were found to be promising as models for placement test development based on statistical performance and content considerations.

The key is indicated by an asterisk (*) for selected response items.

Prototype item notes

Explanatory notes about the prototype item include the following:

- (a) a discussion of the item vis-à-vis the specified stimulus and response attributes, including the target-level language
- (b) examples of acceptable and unacceptable responses for constructed response items
- (c) the estimated range and discrimination point for the item based on pilot testing results

The estimated range indicates the proficiency levels at which the item seems most appropriate in terms of content and performance. The discrimination point indicates the two adjacent levels where the item seems to best differentiate student performance. (See Appendix B for criteria used to determine both estimated range and discrimination point.)

Note: Some prototype items were modified based on pilot testing results. For these items, the estimated range and discrimination point are not available because they have not been pilot tested in their current form.

Additional notes about the item types are provided at the end of each skill section. These notes include supplementary information about the item types from pre- and pilot testing, such as considerations for alternative item formats and variations in wording.

Locate Specific Information (LS)***General description***

The test taker will find specific information in a display. The information may be either non-alphabetic (numerals or symbols) or alphabetic (words, phrases, or abbreviations). The correct response to a question may be the specific information itself or a word or phrase from the display associated with the information.

Text type

Display

Target level

Beginning low through intermediate high

Test level

Level A: essential

Level B: optional, as a warm-up

Item types

In item type LS1, the test taker locates and writes down specific information from a text. In item type LS2, the test taker locates specific information associated with a particular referent and chooses the correct referent from several options.

Item Type LS1***Item format***

Unique answer

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a display.

The item stem consists of a question asking for a piece of alphabetic or non-alphabetic information found in the display. The question ordinarily begins with who, what, when, where, how much, or how many.

Target-level language is found in either the relevant part of the display or the item stem, or both.

Response attributes

The test taker must write down the correct answer, which consists of a number, word, or phrase taken directly from the text. The test taker is not penalized for minor transpositions of numbers, misspellings, or grammatical errors as long as the meaning is clear.

Prototype item

Read the bicycle shop advertisement below and answer the question.

BIKES GALORE!





- Expert repairs — overnight service, most brands
- Affordable rentals — hourly and daily rates
- Lowest prices in town
- All cycling accessories and parts
- Exercise equipment
- Insure your bicycle. Ask about our anti-theft policy.





— 2 WESTSIDE LOCATIONS —

BIKES GALORE
of Southdale
9000 Western Ave.
456-0915





BIKES GALORE
of North Harbor
3900 Verner Blvd.
278-1685

FREE PARKING IN REAR

HOURS: M-F 10-7 SAT 9-5:30

adapted from *Donnelly Yellow Pages*, Los Angeles, 1992

What time does Bikes Galore
close on Wednesdays?

Prototype item notes

Prototype LS1 requires the test taker to interpret the phrase “close on Wednesdays” in the item stem and the abbreviation “M-F” in the text and write down the correct time. Example responses appear below.

Acceptable: 7:00; 7; seven (minor spelling error); 7 p.m.; Bikes Galore close at 7 (minor grammatical error)

Unacceptable: 10-7 (does not demonstrate comprehension of the word “close”) 10; 5:30

Estimated range: BL-IL

Discrimination point: BH/IL

*Item Type LS2**Item format*

Multiple choice

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a display containing at least three members of a referent category (e.g., names, places) that can be distinguished from each other through their association with non-alphabetic information in the text. Note that it is possible to use a display containing only two members of the category, in which case "both" or "neither" can be seen as additional members.

The item stem consists of a question asking for a unique referent such as a person or place found in the text. The question ordinarily begins with who, what, where, or which and provides information that uniquely identifies the referent from other possible responses.

Target-level language is found in either the relevant part of the display or the item stem, or both.

Response attributes

A set of three or four response options in the form of a word or phrase follows the stem. The test taker must circle the correct answer. The key is the correct referent. Distractors consist of other members of the same category (i.e., other persons or places) found in the text.

Prototype item

Here is an Apartment Guide that gives information about four apartments. Use the information to answer the question.

Apartment Guide

Apt. Features	Willow Court	Village Place	Hamill Towers	Pierce Plaza
rent	\$750	\$550	\$700	\$950
bdrms.	2	1	2	2
baths	2	1	1	2
parking		♦	♦	♦
security bldg.	♦		♦	♦
pool	♦	♦		
laundry	♦		♦	♦
pets ok		♦	♦	
unique feature(s)	• on bus line	• all new appliances	• all utilities paid	• A/C • cable ready

adapted from *The Southern California Apartment Magazine*, April 20-May 3, 1994

Circle the correct answer.

Which is the least expensive apartment?

Willow Court *Village Place Hamill Towers Pierce Plaza

Prototype item notes

In Prototype LS2, the test taker must locate the amount of rent for each apartment and identify which is the least expensive. The item stem contains the phrase "least expensive," which is appropriate for intermediate levels.

Estimated range: IL-AH

Discrimination point: IL/IH

LS Notes

1. Item type LS1 could be constructed in multiple-choice format if there were enough pieces of specific information in the display to provide plausible distractors; that is, information of the same category (e.g., times in Prototype LS1 above) as the key.
2. Item type LS2 could be constructed in unique-answer format; however, results from pretesting this item type indicated that the plausible answers are restricted to the category members (e.g., "Willow Court" and "Village Place" in Prototype LS2 above) and it is much faster for the test taker to circle an answer rather than write it in a blank.
3. Prototype LS2 was pretested with both "most expensive" and "least expensive." Results indicated that the item with "most expensive" discriminated between beginning low and beginning high, while the item with "least expensive" discriminated from intermediate low through advanced high. The phrase "most expensive" may be more appropriate for beginning levels because the test taker does not necessarily need to understand the superlative in order to find the correct response. This is an example of how modifying the language can affect the difficulty of an item.

Draw Meaning (DM)

General description

The test taker will demonstrate factual understanding of one or more propositions in a paragraph or multi-paragraph passage. In answering this type of item, the test taker cannot simply glance through a text or match words or phrases to find a piece of information. Rather, the test taker must draw meaning from the text by interpreting one or more of the following:

- vocabulary and sentence structure
- cohesive devices, including pronoun reference, ellipses, and lexical cohesion

Text type

Paragraph or passage

Target level

Beginning low through advanced high

Test level

Level A: essential

Level B: essential

Item types

In item type DM1, the test taker writes down a short answer to a factual question about a text. In item type DM2, the test taker selects one of four responses to a factual question about a text. In item type DM3, the test taker selects three of five responses to a factual question about a text.

Item Type DM1

Item format

Unique answer

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a paragraph or multi-paragraph passage.

The item stem consists of a factual question about the text that can be answered with a word or a phrase. The question ordinarily begins with who, what, where, or when.

The relevant part of the primary text contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

The test taker must write down the correct answer. A complete sentence is not required. The test taker is not penalized for misspellings or grammatical errors as long as the meaning is clear.

Prototype item

Read the announcement below and answer the question.

The Department of Parks and Recreation
is sponsoring free Saturday evening concerts
July 9, 16 and 23.
Concerts will begin at 7 p.m. and will last about two hours.
They will be held in the new outdoor amphitheater.
Call 555-8632 for more information.

adapted from Elk Grove Adult School ESL Placement Test

Where will the concerts take place? _____

Prototype item notes

Prototype DM1 requires the test taker to interpret the phrase "be held" in the text and know that it is synonymous with "take place" in the item stem. Comprehension of the word "sponsoring" can also help the test taker eliminate "Department of Parks and Recreation" as a possible response. Example responses appear below.

Acceptable: amphitheater; new outdoor amphitheater;
amphither (i.e., minor misspelling)

Unacceptable: Department of Parks and Recreation; outdoor; They
will be held; July 9, 16 and 23

Estimated range: BL-IH

Discrimination point: IL/IH

Item Type DM2

Item format

Multiple choice

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a paragraph or multi-paragraph passage.

The item stem consists of a factual question about the text. The correct answer to the question is ordinarily contained within a few adjacent clauses in the text, although clues to the correct answer may be found in other places in the text as well.

The relevant part of the primary text contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

A set of four single-phrase or single-sentence response options follows each stem. The response options contain language at a lower level than the target level. The test taker must circle the letter of the correct option. The key is a phrase or sentence answering the question using words other than those in the text.

The three distractors are grammatically accurate and plausibly relate to the content of the text, either by repeating or paraphrasing segments of the text or by building upon a word or idea found in the text (Popham, 1990).

At least one of the distractors incorporates words or phrases from the section of the text where the correct answer is found but with a change of meaning based either on alternative senses of words or on alternative interpretations of syntax. This type of distractor is intended to draw students who are matching words and phrases rather than reading for understanding.

Other distractors are inaccurate in that they are either unsupported or contradicted by information in the text.

*Prototype item***City News**

Thursday, June 23, 1994

**Person of the Week**

City News' Person of the Week is adult school student Oscar Rodriguez, whose dream came true last week when he received his high school diploma after six years of study at City Adult School.

Rodriguez said his primary motivation for graduating was his 17-year-old daughter, who becomes a high school senior this fall. "I wanted to have my diploma first," the 35-year-old student explained.

Rodriguez, who attended classes at the adult school to

learn English and become a U.S. citizen, accomplished two feats in one year: getting his high school diploma and being named Citizen of the Year by the State Consortium for Adult Education.

Rodriguez came to the United States 14 years ago from Guatemala. At that time, he felt no immediate need to learn English since the people he spent time with spoke primarily Spanish and he listened to Spanish radio and TV.

Later, he realized he needed to learn English in order to get his high school diploma. So, in 1988 he enrolled in City Adult School where he proved to be a very diligent and focused student. He found time to study and participate in community activities while working two jobs and raising a family.

According to Consortium president Gerry Delaney, "The adult school is full of students like Rodriguez who have many responsibilities, but Rodriguez

stands out because he always gets the job done with a smile and in a timely fashion." The Consortium acknowledged Rodriguez' accomplishments by giving him the Citizen of the Year award.

"I feel proud. I wanted to do this as an example for my kids," said Rodriguez, who has another daughter, age 7, and two sons, 15 and 10.

In fact, Rodriguez has set a good example not only at school but at work. Last year he was named Most Outstanding Employee at County Hospital where he works as a nurses' aide.

Receiving his diploma is only the first step to other ambitions for Rodriguez, who plans to continue his work in the medical field. "Now I want to go to college so I can become a nurse."

City News congratulates Oscar Rodriguez and wishes him continued success.

adapted from Culver City News, June 23, 1994

Circle the best answer for the following question.

According to the article, which statement **best** describes many students at City Adult School?

- a. They are full-time students.
- b. They like Rodriguez because he is nice.
- *c. They make time for school even though they have a lot to do.
- d. They are always in a good mood and get their work done quickly.

Prototype item notes

Option C, the key, is a paraphrase of the relevant proposition in the text describing students at City Adult School. Option A incorporates the phrase "full-time students," which is similar in form but not in meaning to "full of students" found in the text. Option B incorporates the exact words "like Rodriguez" found in the text but uses a different syntactic structure which changes the meaning of the phrase. Option D is a paraphrase of an adjacent clause and is inaccurate in that the clause refers to Rodriguez, not to the other students at City Adult School.

Estimated range: IL-AH

Discrimination point: IL/IH

Item Type DM3

Item format

Select three correct

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a paragraph or a passage.

The item stem consists of a factual question about the text requiring the test taker to identify three correct answers.

The relevant part of the primary text contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

A set of five single-phrase or single-sentence response options follows each stem. The response options contain language at a lower level than the target level. Each option is preceded by a blank. The test taker must check the three correct options. The keys are phrases or statements answering the question using words other than those in the text.

The two distractors are grammatically accurate and plausibly relate to the content of the text, either by repeating or paraphrasing segments of the text or by building upon a word or idea found in the text (Popham, 1990). The distractors are inappropriate in that they are either unsupported or contradicted by information in the text.

Prototype item

City News

Thursday, June 23, 1994

**Person of the Week**

City News' Person of the Week is adult school student Oscar Rodriguez, whose dream came true last week when he received his high school diploma after six years of study at City Adult School.

Rodriguez said his primary motivation for graduating was his 17-year-old daughter, who becomes a high school senior this fall. "I wanted to have my diploma first," the 35-year-old student explained.

Rodriguez, who attended classes at the adult school to

learn English and become a U.S. citizen, accomplished two feats in one year: getting his high school diploma and being named Citizen of the Year by the State Consortium for Adult Education.

Rodriguez came to the United States 14 years ago from Guatemala. At that time, he felt no immediate need to learn English since the people he spent time with spoke primarily Spanish and he listened to Spanish radio and TV.

Later, he realized he needed to learn English in order to get his high school diploma. So, in 1988 he enrolled in City Adult School where he proved to be a very diligent and focused student. He found time to study and participate in community activities while working two jobs and raising a family.

According to Consortium president Gerry Delaney, "The adult school is full of students like Rodriguez who have many responsibilities, but Rodriguez

stands out because he always gets the job done with a smile and in a timely fashion." The Consortium acknowledged Rodriguez' accomplishments by giving him the Citizen of the Year award.

"I feel proud. I wanted to do this as an example for my kids," said Rodriguez, who has another daughter, age 7, and two sons, 15 and 10.

In fact, Rodriguez has set a good example not only at school but at work. Last year he was named Most Outstanding Employee at County Hospital where he works as a nurses' aide.

Receiving his diploma is only the first step to other ambitions for Rodriguez, who plans to continue his work in the medical field. "Now I want to go to college so I can become a nurse."

City News congratulates Oscar Rodriguez and wishes him continued success.

adapted from *Culver City News*, June 23, 1994

According to the article, why did Rodriguez get his high school diploma? Check (✓) the **three** correct answers.

- ☐ to get a job
- ☒ to be able to go to college*
- ☐ to make his parents proud
- ☒ to graduate before his daughter*
- ☐ to set an example for his children*

Prototype item notes

Options B, D, and E, the keys, are reasons stated directly in the text for Rodriguez obtaining his diploma. Option A is contradicted by the text (Rodriguez already has a job) and Option C is unsupported by the text (his parents are not mentioned).

Note: Prototype DM3 was modified based on pilot testing results and thus the estimated range and discrimination point are not available.

DM Notes

1. Item type DM1 could be constructed in multiple-choice format if there were enough pieces of specific information in the display to provide plausible distractors; that is, information of the same category (e.g., names of places in Prototype DM1 above) as the key.
2. Item types such as DM2 and DM3 that require a response of a clause or more are not recommended in an open-ended format. Results from pretesting showed that open-ended responses were difficult to score because of the variety of answers provided. Moreover, many students responded to such questions by copying large sections of the text, which provided little information about the students' comprehension.

Extract and Combine Information (EC)

General description

The test taker will extract and combine information from two or more propositions in one or more texts to construct meaning not directly stated in any one text. This skill is used, for example, in interpreting a problem stated in one text and locating its solution in another, or in combining instances of a phenomenon from two different sections of a text.

Text type

Display, paragraph, or passage

Target level

Intermediate low through advanced high

Test level

Level A: essential

Level B: essential

Item types

In item type EC1, the test taker writes down a short answer to a question that requires combining information from two or more propositions in a primary text. In item type EC2, the test taker writes down a short answer to a question about a problem or condition described in an item stem using information from a primary text. In item type EC3, the test taker interprets information about a problem or condition described in an item stem and selects the referent that satisfies the problem or condition. In item type EC4, the test taker interprets two or more propositions from a secondary text associated with a particular referent found in a primary text and selects the correct referent from several options.

Item Type EC1

Item format

Unique answer

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a display, paragraph, or passage.

The item stem is a factual question asking about information in the text that cannot be found within a single sentence but must be combined from two different places in the text to make a single meaning. For example, the question may ask for a number that represents a quantity of something mentioned in the text in different places. In this case, care must be taken that the information is presented in the text in such a way that it cannot easily be obtained by glancing through the text and combining numbers; instead, meaning must be drawn from different propositions in order to find the correct quantity. Mathematical ability should not be required to find the answer.

The relevant part of the primary text contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

The test taker must write down the correct answer, which is a word or phrase not found in the text. The test taker is not penalized for misspellings or grammatical errors as long as the meaning is clear.

Prototype item

Read the story and answer the question.

Strange True Stories

Police arrested James Haskell, seventeen, in March after he tried to buy beer at Wally's Mini-Mart by using a stolen driver's license—that of Douglas Cleaver. The man behind the counter at Wally's knew it was stolen because he is Douglas Cleaver, who had had his license taken in a truck break-in two months earlier. Haskell fled when he heard Cleaver talking to the police but left his wallet, which contained his real driver's license.

adapted from *The Los Angeles Reader*, June 2, 1994

How many licenses did James Haskell have? _____

Prototype item notes

In order to find the correct answer (two), the test taker must interpret and combine information from two separate propositions in the text. Example responses appear below.

Acceptable: 2; two; He has two licenses; He have two license (i.e., grammatical errors but meaning is clear)

Unacceptable: 1; two months; his real driver's license

Estimated range: BL-AH

Discrimination point: BH/IL

Item Type EC2

Item format

Unique answer

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a display, paragraph, or passage.

The item stem is a secondary text which consists of a statement written in the second person describing a scenario, followed by a factual question about the primary text. The statement sets up a condition or a problem, and the question asks the test taker to locate and use information in the primary text to satisfy the condition or solve the problem.

Target-level language is found in the relevant part of the primary text or the item stem, or both.

Response attributes

The test taker must write down the correct answer to the question, which is a word or phrase not found in the primary text. The answer must demonstrate understanding of the relevant propositions, but does not need to be a complete sentence. The test taker is not penalized for misspellings or grammatical errors as long as the meaning is clear.

Prototype item

Read the bicycle shop advertisement below and answer the question.



- Expert repairs — overnight service, most brands
- Affordable rentals — hourly and daily rates
- Lowest prices in town
- All cycling accessories and parts
- Exercise equipment
- Insure your bicycle. Ask about our anti-theft policy.



BIKES GALORE!



— 2 WESTSIDE LOCATIONS —

BIKES GALORE
of Southdale
9000 Western Ave.
456-0915

FREE PARKING IN REAR

BIKES GALORE
of North Harbor
3900 Verner Blvd.
278-1685

HOURS: M-F 10-7 SAT 9-5:30

adapted from *Donnelly Yellow Pages*, Los Angeles, 1992

You took your bicycle to Bikes Galore on Friday for repairs. On what day will it be ready?

Prototype item notes

The test taker must interpret both the problem stated in the item stem and the phrase "overnight repairs" in the advertisement to get the correct answer. Example responses appear below.

Acceptable: Saturday, the next day (both answers demonstrate comprehension of "overnight")

Unacceptable: Overnight (does not demonstrate comprehension of the word)

Estimated range: BH-IH

Discrimination point: IL/IH

Item Type EC3

Item format

Multiple choice

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a display containing at least three members of a referent category (e.g., names, places) that can be distinguished from each other through their association with other information in the text.

The item stem is a secondary text consisting of a statement written in the second person describing a scenario followed by a factual question. The statement sets up a condition or a problem, and the question asks the test taker to locate a unique referent in the primary text that satisfies the condition or solves the problem.

Target-level language is found in the relevant part of the primary text or the item stem, or both.

Response attributes

A set of three or four response options in the form of a word or phrase follows the stem. The key is the correct referent. Distractors consist of other members of the same category (i.e., other persons or places) found in the text.

Prototype item

Read the bicycle shop advertisements below.

Village Bike Shop

World Class Bicycles
Call: 257-2453

**WE SHIP
WORLDWIDE**




854 Ocean Blvd • Palm Village

- Bicycles for the entire family
- Free lifetime service plan with purchase of any bike
- All makes & models expertly serviced
- Quality selection of accessories & apparel
- Bicycle & exerciser rentals available

Free Parking Available
★ OPEN 7 DAYS ★



BIKES GALORE!





- Expert repairs — overnight service, most brands
- Affordable rentals — hourly and daily rates
- Lowest prices in town
- All cycling accessories and parts
- Exercise equipment
- Insure your bicycle. Ask about our anti-theft policy.





- 2 WESTSIDE LOCATIONS -

BIKES GALORE
of Southdale
9000 Western Ave.
458-0915

FREE PARKING IN REAR





BIKES GALORE
of North Harbor
3900 Verner Blvd.
278-1685

HOURS: M-F 10-7 SAT 9-5:30

both ads adapted from *Donnelly Yellow Pages*, Los Angeles, 1992

You want to send your cousin in Spain a bicycle as a gift. Which shop will send the bicycle for you? Circle the correct answer.

Bikes Galore

*Village Bike Shop

Both

Prototype item notes

The test taker must interpret both the problem stated in the item stem and the sentence "We ship worldwide" in the advertisement to find the correct answer.

Estimated range: BL-IH

Discrimination point: BH/IL

*Item Type EC4**Item format*

Multiple choice

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a display containing at least three members of a referent category (e.g., names, places) that can be distinguished from each other through their association with other information in the text.

The item stem consists of a secondary text containing a paragraph or display that includes several pieces of information that uniquely identify a referent found in the primary text (i.e., the display) using different words than are found in the display, and a question asking which referent is being described. Care must be taken to ensure that the description contains enough features to identify one referent only.

Target-level language is found in the relevant part of the primary text or the item stem, or both.

Response attributes

A set of three or four response options in the form of a word or phrase follows the stem. The key is the correct referent. Distractors consist of the other members of the same category (i.e., other persons or places) in the display.

Prototype item**Apartment Guide**

Apt. Features	Willow Court	Village Place	Hamill Towers	Pierce Plaza
rent	\$750	\$550	\$700	\$950
bdrms.	2	1	2	2
baths	2	1	1	2
parking		♦	♦	♦
security bldg.	♦		♦	♦
pool	♦	♦		
laundry	♦		♦	♦
pets ok		♦	♦	
unique feature(s)	♦ on bus line	♦ all new appliances	♦ all utilities paid	♦ A/C ♦ cable ready

adapted from *The Southern California Apartment Magazine*, April 20-May 3, 1994

Read this newspaper ad:

Roommate Wanted*

Seeking female to share,
large sunny 2-bedroom apt
w/non-smoker. Own bath.
Security, washer/dryer, pool.

Call Maria 555-8935

Which apartment does the ad best describe? Circle the correct answer.

*Willow Court Village Place Hamill Towers Pierce Plaza

Prototype item notes

The test taker must interpret the propositions in the secondary text, particularly the phrase "own bath" as well as the information in the advertisement to get the correct answer.

Estimated range: BH-AL

Discrimination point: BH/IL

EC Notes

1. Item types EC1 and EC2 could be constructed in multiple-choice format with plausible distractors either invented or found in the text. However, pretesting results indicated that the unique-answer format was very easy to score and reduces the guessing factor inherent in multiple-choice items.
2. Item type EC3 and EC4 could be constructed in unique-answer format; however, results from pretesting this item type indicated that the plausible answers are restricted to the category members (e.g., "Willow Court" and "Village Place" in Prototype EC4 above) and it is much faster for the test taker to select an answer rather than write it in a blank.

Interpret Relationships (IR)

General description

The test taker will identify relationships between propositions in a text; that is, how the propositions function together to communicate a message. To perform this skill, the test taker must ordinarily be able to understand both the literal meaning of the relevant propositions in the passage and the logical connections between them. The relationships described below are appropriate for placement.

Cause/effect: Given a cause found in a text, the test taker will identify its effect(s); or given an effect, the test taker will identify its cause(s).

Compare/contrast: The test taker will identify similarities or differences between two referents in a text.

Generalization/example: Given a generalization stated or implied in a text, the test taker will identify example(s) from the text; or given examples stated in a text, the test taker will make a generalization.

Main idea/supporting details: The test taker will determine the relative importance of propositions in a text by distinguishing between main ideas and supporting details.

Sequence of events: The test taker will arrange the propositions of a narrative text in chronological order.

Text type

Paragraph or passage

Target level

Intermediate low through advanced high

Test levels

Level A: essential; at least one IR item

Level B: essential; at least one item assessing main idea/supporting details; other IR item types are optional

Item types

In item type IR1, the test taker chooses the statement that has the correct relationship with information in the item stem. In item type IR2, the test taker chooses three statements that have the correct relationship with information in the item stem. In item type IR3, the test taker selects the best summary of a text. In item type IR4, the test taker numbers a series of events from a narrative in chronological order.

Item Type IR1

Item format

Multiple choice

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a paragraph or a passage containing at least one stated or implied instance of a relationship of cause/effect, compare/contrast, or generalization/example.

The item stem consists of a factual question presenting information stated or implied in the text and asking the test taker to identify other information from the text having a specified relationship with the given information, as follows:

- (a) Cause/effect: The item stem presents a cause and asks for its effect, or presents an effect and asks for its cause.
- (b) Compare/contrast: The item stem presents two referents from the text and asks how they are similar or dissimilar.
- (c) Generalization/example: The item stem presents a generalization and asks for an example, or presents an example and asks for a generalization.

The relevant part of the primary text contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

A set of four single-phrase or single-sentence response options follows each stem. The response options contain language at a lower level than the target level. The test taker must circle the letter of the correct option. The key is an accurate paraphrase of the requested information.

The three distractors are grammatically accurate and may reiterate words and phrases found in the text. The distractors consist of information supported by the text (i.e., accurate information about the text) and plausibly relate to the question but are inappropriate in that they do not adequately represent the specified relationship.

Prototype item

City News

Thursday, June 23, 1994

**Person of the Week**

City News' Person of the Week is adult school student Oscar Rodriguez, whose dream came true last week when he received his high school diploma after six years of study at City Adult School.

Rodriguez said his primary motivation for graduating was his 17-year-old daughter, who becomes a high school senior this fall. "I wanted to have my diploma first," the 35-year-old student explained.

Rodriguez, who attended classes at the adult school to

learn English and become a U.S. citizen, accomplished two feats in one year: getting his high school diploma and being named Citizen of the Year by the State Consortium for Adult Education.

Rodriguez came to the United States 14 years ago from Guatemala. At that time, he felt no immediate need to learn English since the people he spent time with spoke primarily Spanish and he listened to Spanish radio and TV.

Later, he realized he needed to learn English in order to get his high school diploma. So, in 1988 he enrolled in City Adult School where he proved to be a very diligent and focused student. He found time to study and participate in community activities while working two jobs and raising a family.

According to Consortium president Gerry Delaney, "The adult school is full of students like Rodriguez who have many responsibilities, but Rodriguez

stands out because he always gets the job done with a smile and in a timely fashion." The Consortium acknowledged Rodriguez' accomplishments by giving him the Citizen of the Year award.

"I feel proud. I wanted to do this as an example for my kids," said Rodriguez, who has another daughter, age 7, and two sons, 15 and 10.

In fact, Rodriguez has set a good example not only at school but at work. Last year he was named Most Outstanding Employee at County Hospital where he works as a nurses' aide.

Receiving his diploma is only the first step to other ambitions for Rodriguez, who plans to continue his work in the medical field. "Now I want to go to college so I can become a nurse."

City News congratulates Oscar Rodriguez and wishes him continued success.

adapted from Culver City News, June 23, 1994

Circle the best answer for the following question.

Why was Rodriguez chosen as Citizen of the Year?

- a. He studied a lot and accomplished two feats in one year.
- b. He had two jobs and set a good example for his children.
- *c. He worked hard to get an education and had a positive attitude.
- d. He attended City Adult School for six years and got his diploma.

Prototype item notes

Prototype IR1 assesses a cause/effect relationship. All of the response options are accurate statements about the text that plausibly relate to the question. However, only the key (Option C) identifies the reason why Rodriguez was chosen as Citizen of the Year.

Estimated range: IH-AH

Discrimination point: AH+

Item Type IR2

Item format

Select three correct

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a paragraph or a passage containing at least one stated or implied instance of the following: (a) a cause with a series of effects or vice versa; (b) two referents with a series of similarities or differences; or (c) a generalization with a series of supporting examples.

The item stem consists of a factual question presenting information stated or implied in the text and asking the test taker to identify three statements about the text having a specified relationship with the given information, as follows:

- (a) Cause/effect: The item stem presents a cause and asks for three effects, or presents an effect and asks for three causes.
- (b) Compare/contrast: The item stem presents two referents from the text and asks for three similarities or differences.
- (c) Generalization/example: The item stem presents a generalization and asks for three examples that support the generalization.

The relevant part of the primary text contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

A set of five single-phrase or single-sentence response options follows each stem. The response options contain language at a lower level than the target level. Each option is preceded by a blank. The test taker must check the three correct options. The keys are accurate paraphrases of the examples found in the text that support the generalization.

The two distractors are grammatically accurate and may reiterate words and phrases found in the text. The distractors consist of information supported by the text (i.e., accurate information about the text) and plausibly relate to the question but are inappropriate in that they do not adequately represent the specified relationship.

Prototype item

City News

Thursday, June 23, 1994

**Person of the Week**

City News' Person of the Week is adult school student Oscar Rodriguez, whose dream came true last week when he received his high school diploma after six years of study at City Adult School.

Rodriguez said his primary motivation for graduating was his 17-year-old daughter, who becomes a high school senior this fall. "I wanted to have my diploma first," the 35-year-old student explained.

Rodriguez, who attended classes at the adult school to

learn English and become a U.S. citizen, accomplished two feats in one year: getting his high school diploma and being named Citizen of the Year by the State Consortium for Adult Education.

Rodriguez came to the United States 14 years ago from Guatemala. At that time, he felt no immediate need to learn English since the people he spent time with spoke primarily Spanish and he listened to Spanish radio and TV.

Later, he realized he needed to learn English in order to get his high school diploma. So, in 1988 he enrolled in City Adult School where he proved to be a very diligent and focused student. He found time to study and participate in community activities while working two jobs and raising a family.

According to Consortium president Gerry Delaney, "The adult school is full of students like Rodriguez who have many responsibilities, but Rodriguez

stands out because he always gets the job done with a smile and in a timely fashion." The Consortium acknowledged Rodriguez' accomplishments by giving him the Citizen of the Year award.

"I feel proud. I wanted to do this as an example for my kids," said Rodriguez, who has another daughter, age 7, and two sons, 15 and 10.

In fact, Rodriguez has set a good example not only at school but at work. Last year he was named Most Outstanding Employee at County Hospital where he works as a nurses' aide.

Receiving his diploma is only the first step to other ambitions for Rodriguez, who plans to continue his work in the medical field. "Now I want to go to college so I can become a nurse."

City News congratulates Oscar Rodriguez and wishes him continued success.

adapted from Culver City News, June 23, 1994

According to the article, what made it difficult for Rodriguez to get his high school diploma? Check (✓) the **three** correct answers.

- ☐ He held two jobs.*
- ☐ He needed to learn English.*
- ☐ He was used to responsibility.
- ☐ He had to take care of his family.*
- ☐ He was named Citizen of the Year.

Prototype item notes

Prototype IR2 assesses a generalization/example relationship based on an implied generalization. All five options are accurate statements about the text, but only Options A, B, and D, the keys, support the generalization that it was difficult for Rodriguez to get his diploma.

Note: Prototype IR2 was modified based on pilot testing results and thus the estimated range and discrimination point are not available.

Item Type IR3**Item format**

Multiple choice

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a paragraph or passage that contains a central idea or ideas, and several minor points or details.

The item stem consists of the following question, with alternative wordings in brackets:

Which paragraph [sentence] retells the most important idea[s] in the article [passage/story]?

Target-level language is found in the primary text.

Response attributes

A set of four response options consisting of one to three sentences follows each stem. The response options contain language at a lower level than the target level. The test taker must circle the letter of the correct option. The key is an accurate paraphrase of the most important points discussed in the text.

The three distractors are grammatically accurate and may reiterate words and phrases found in the text. The distractors consist of information supported by the text (i.e., accurate information about the text) but are inappropriate in that they are either too narrow in scope (i.e., they contain supporting details from the text rather than the most important ideas) or too broad in scope (i.e., they are more general than necessary to account for the most important ideas).

Prototype item

City News

Thursday, June 23, 1994

**Person of the Week**

City News' Person of the Week is adult school student Oscar Rodriguez, whose dream came true last week when he received his high school diploma after six years of study at City Adult School.

Rodriguez said his primary motivation for graduating was his 17-year-old daughter, who becomes a high school senior this fall. "I wanted to have my diploma first," the 35-year-old student explained.

Rodriguez, who attended classes at the adult school to

learn English and become a U.S. citizen, accomplished two feats in one year: getting his high school diploma and being named Citizen of the Year by the State Consortium for Adult Education.

Rodriguez came to the United States 14 years ago from Guatemala. At that time, he felt no immediate need to learn English since the people he spent time with spoke primarily Spanish and he listened to Spanish radio and TV.

Later, he realized he needed to learn English in order to get his high school diploma. So, in 1988 he enrolled in City Adult School where he proved to be a very diligent and focused student. He found time to study and participate in community activities while working two jobs and raising a family.

According to Consortium president Gerry Delaney, "The adult school is full of students like Rodriguez who have many responsibilities, but Rodriguez

stands out because he always gets the job done with a smile and in a timely fashion." The Consortium acknowledged Rodriguez' accomplishments by giving him the Citizen of the Year award.

"I feel proud. I wanted to do this as an example for my kids," said Rodriguez, who has another daughter, age 7, and two sons, 15 and 10.

In fact, Rodriguez has set a good example not only at school but at work. Last year he was named Most Outstanding Employee at County Hospital where he works as a nurses' aide.

Receiving his diploma is only the first step to other ambitions for Rodriguez, who plans to continue his work in the medical field. "Now I want to go to college so I can become a nurse."

City News congratulates Oscar Rodriguez and wishes him continued success.

adapted from Culver City News, June 23, 1994

Circle the best answer for the following question.

Which paragraph retells the **most important** ideas in the article?

- a. When Rodriguez came to the United States he didn't speak English and most of his friends only spoke Spanish. After many years of study, he has learned to speak English and has earned a high school diploma.
- *b. Rodriguez received his high school diploma and was named Citizen of the Year because he overcame many obstacles to make his dream come true. He hopes his accomplishments will serve as an example to his children.
- c. Rodriguez works two jobs to support his family. Because of his excellence at County Hospital where he works as a nurse's aide, he was named Most Outstanding Employee. Rodriguez has set a good example for children.
- d. Rodriguez studied at City Adult School for six years. He was motivated to get his high school diploma by his oldest daughter who will be a high school senior this year. He felt it was important to graduate before she did.

Prototype item notes

Each option contains factual information about the text; however, only the key (Option B) contains the main idea. Options A, C, and D are too narrow in scope.

Estimated range: IL-AH

Discrimination point: IL/IH

Item Type IR4**Item format**

Sequencing

Stimulus attributes

The primary text is a narrative passage which has at least five discrete events. The events must not be presented in chronological order within the passage.

The item stem begins with the following instructions, with words in brackets indicating that modifications can be made here as appropriate to the text:

Below are some important events from [the story]. Number the events (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) in the order they happened. The first one is done for you.

A set of five sentences follows the instructions. Each sentence describes one of the events mentioned in the text. The events are presented in random order.

The primary text contains target-level language. The sentences in the item stem contain language at a lower level.

Response attributes

Each sentence is preceded by a blank, in which the test taker must write a number corresponding to the chronological ordering of the events in the narrative. The first event contains a 1 in the blank.

Prototype item

Read the story and answer the question.

Strange True Stories

Police arrested James Haskell, seventeen, in March after he tried to buy beer at Wally's Mini-Mart by using a stolen driver's license—that of Douglas Cleaver. The man behind the counter at Wally's knew it was stolen because he is Douglas Cleaver, who had had his license taken in a truck break-in two months earlier. Haskell fled when he heard Cleaver talking to the police but left his wallet, which contained his real driver's license.

adapted from *The Los Angeles Reader*, June 2, 1994

Below are some important events from the story. Number the events (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) in the order they happened. The first one is done for you.

key

- 2 _____ James Haskell tried to buy some beer at Wally's Mini-Mart.
3 _____ Douglas Cleaver called the police.
1 1 Someone broke into Douglas Cleaver's truck.
5 _____ The police found James Haskell and arrested him.
4 _____ James Haskell ran away from Wally's.

Prototype item notes

The test taker must reconstruct the chronological order of the events in the story, which are not narrated in the order in which they occurred.

Estimated range: IL-AH

Discrimination point: IL/IH

IR Notes

1. IR item types that require the test taker to explain complex relationships are not recommended in an open-ended format. Results from pretesting showed that when asked to respond in an open-ended format, test takers either copied large sections of the text or provided no response at all. When responses were provided they were difficult to score because of the variety of responses given.
2. Item type IR4 was pretested with and without the first event indicated. Pretesting results showed that indicating the first event seemed to help orient test takers to the task and did not limit the ability of the item to discriminate at the upper levels. This item type was also pretested and pilot tested with a multi-paragraph passage using six events rather than five. Pilot testing results suggested that ordering six events makes the item too difficult for the population.

Make Inferences (MI)

General description

The test taker will draw conclusions about information implied but not explicitly stated in a text.

Text type

Paragraph, multi-paragraph passage

Target level

Intermediate high to advanced high

Test level

Level A: optional

Level B: essential

Item types

MI item types were not developed as part of the prototyping effort. Texts that lend themselves to assessing this skill need to be selected and item types developed following the prototyping process described in Kahn et al. (1995).

Writing Task Specifications Overview

This section provides specifications for developing writing tasks that require the test taker to generate (GN) a writing sample of at least one paragraph in length. The section is organized as follows. First, an introductory page provides the following information:

General description

A brief definition of the skill as operationalized in task types and a description of task elements

Test level characteristics

A discussion of the relationship between test level (A, B or both) and elements of a writing task

Task types

A brief description of each task type

The introductory page is followed by specifications for each task type. The specifications include the following information:

Test level

The appropriate test level (A, B or both) for the task

Stimulus attributes

The characteristics of the input to the test taker, which include:

- (a) a description of the task
- (b) specific information about the primary text and, where appropriate, the secondary text
- (c) the language characteristics of the prompt and, where appropriate, the secondary text
- (d) a description of the space provided for the response

Response attributes

The characteristics of the expected response, including the content and linguistic features of a model response

Prototype task

A task that exemplifies the task type

All prototype tasks were pilot tested in the form in which they are presented and were found to be promising as models for placement test development based on statistical performance and content considerations.

Note: The facsimiles showing the space provided for the test taker's response have been reduced in this document. On an operational test, facsimiles should be larger.

Prototype task notes

Explanatory notes about the prototype task, detailing the audience and purpose of the task, the source of informational content, and, where appropriate, how that information needs to be transformed in the response

Model response

An actual response to the prototype task from pilot testing representing the highest score on the scoring rubric

Note: See Scoring GN Tasks for scoring procedures and rubrics.

Following the writing task specifications, additional notes about the task types are provided. Recommended procedures for scoring GN tasks and scoring rubrics for Level A and Level B are presented at the end of the section.

Generate (GN)**General description**

The test taker will generate a written response of a paragraph or more in length to a prompt of two to four sentences that explicitly specifies the elements of the writing task including audience, purpose, form, and source of informational content. These elements are defined below.

Audience

The addressee, which can be personal (e.g., friend, family, pen pal) or institutional (e.g., landlord, newspaper, business, potential employer)

Purpose

The communicative goal of the task

Form

The genre (e.g., note or letter) of the expected response

Informational content

The primary source of the information to be presented in the response, which can be one of the following: (a) the prompt itself; (b) the primary text; (c) a secondary text; or (d) personal experience. Whatever the source, it is essential that the writing task be constructed in such a way that the test taker cannot simply copy information from the source to adequately fulfill the task.

The prompt also provides a context for the writing task by relating the task to a previously read primary text, either by providing some or all of the informational content for the writing task or by serving as a springboard to set up a related problem or scenario.

The task is authentic and communicative in that it represents tasks that adult ESL students might want or need to carry out outside of the ESL classroom environment. It is culturally accessible to the majority of test takers and elicits writing samples that can be scored quickly and reliably.

Writing samples are judged holistically on task fulfillment and use of English.

Test level characteristics

A given writing task can be used to assess a range of levels since it is scored on a scale tied to specific proficiency levels. A task is targeted at a range of levels so that test takers at the lowest level within the range are able to provide a scoreable response even if they cannot adequately fulfill the task, and test takers at the highest level can fulfill the task successfully both in terms of content development and linguistic control appropriate for that level.

Tasks that only appear on Level A tests are targeted from beginning high through intermediate high.¹¹ Tasks that only appear on Level B tests are targeted from intermediate low through advanced high. Tasks that could appear on both Level A and Level B tests are targeted from beginning high through advanced high.

The targeted level of a writing task is determined by a number of factors, as specified in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2
Characteristics of Level A and Level B Writing Tasks

Level	Length (Form)	Audience	Primary Function	Primary Text	Informational Content
A	Paragraph (e.g., note)	Personal	Social Factual†	Display† Paragraph	Prompt Personal Experience†
A & B	Passage (e.g., letter)	Personal	Social† Factual	Paragraph	Primary Text Personal Experience† Secondary Text†
B	Passage (e.g., letter)	Institutional	Factual† Suasive	Passage	Personal Experience Secondary Text

† has not been developed

Task types

In task type GN1 (Level A), the test taker writes a short note fulfilling a social function. In task type GN2 (Levels A and B), the test taker writes a personal letter using information presented in a primary text to fulfill a factual function. In task type GN3 (Level B), the test taker writes an institutional letter drawing on personal experience to fulfill a suasive function. In task type GN4 (Level B), the test taker writes an institutional letter using information presented in a secondary text to fulfill a suasive function.

¹¹Beginning low students may be able to copy limited written materials or to complete a simple form but are not expected to be able to generate a writing sample.

Task Type GN1**Test level**

Level A

Stimulus attributes

The task is to write either a personal or institutional note to fulfill a basic social function using specific information provided in the prompt.

The primary text is a display or a paragraph appropriate for Level A test takers.

The language of the writing prompt is simple and clear using structures and vocabulary appropriate for students entering beginning high.

A facsimile of a ruled note pad containing six to ten lines is provided for the test taker's response.

Response attributes

The test taker must generate an appropriate response to the writing task in the space provided. The responses are scored by trained raters using a clearly articulated scoring rubric.

The model response is a series of related sentences that form one or more paragraphs and fulfill all the task requirements. The model response demonstrates adequate control over simple structures, although there may be some errors. Complex structures may be attempted. The model response may include a few words or phrases directly copied from the primary text or the prompt but these are usually incorporated into the test taker's own language.

Prototype task

The Department of Parks and Recreation
is sponsoring free Saturday evening concerts

July 9, 16 and 23.

Concerts will begin at 7 p.m. and will last about two hours.

They will be held in the new outdoor amphitheater.

Call 555-8632 for more information.

adapted from Elk Grove Adult School ESL Placement Test

Your friend saw the announcement above and asked you to go to the concert on July 16th. You can't go that evening. Write a note explaining the problem and ask your friend to go with you on the 23rd.

Just a note ...

Prototype task notes

The audience is personal (a friend) and the purpose is to explain a problem and make a suggestion.

The test taker does not need to use the information from the text per se in the response, although he or she may use language from the prompt. If language from the prompt is used, it must be transformed from the second person to the first person.

Model response**Just a note ...**

My friend, I saw your note last night, when I came from my work I see you want go to the concert on July 16th with me, I'm so sorry but in the day I will be visit my brother in his house, but I want go to the concert too, what do you thing about July 23rd? please let me know if you want go with me

Thanks

Task Type GN2**Test level**

Level A and Level B

Stimulus attributes

The task is to write a personal letter to fulfill a factual function by retelling specific information presented in the primary text in the first person.

The primary text is a paragraph targeted at the intermediate levels and appropriate for both Level A and Level B test takers. The paragraph is narrated in the third person and contains at least three discrete events that are not presented in chronological order.

The language of the writing prompt is simple and clear using structures and vocabulary appropriate for students entering beginning high.

A facsimile of a ruled sheet of paper containing fifteen to twenty lines is provided for the test taker's response and includes a salutation and opening sentence to orient the test taker to the task.

Response attributes

The test taker must generate an appropriate response to the writing task in the space provided. The responses are scored by trained raters using a clearly articulated scoring rubric.

The model response for Level A is a series of related sentences that form one or more paragraphs and fulfill all the task requirements. The model response demonstrates adequate control over simple structures, although there may be some errors. Complex structures may be attempted. The model response may include a few words or phrases directly copied from the primary text or the prompt but these are usually incorporated into the test taker's own language.

The model response for Level B is a series of related sentences that form one or more paragraphs and fulfill all the task requirements. Most ideas are effectively integrated and developed. The model response contains a variety of simple and complex structures with few or no errors in simple structures and possibly some errors with complex structures. Advanced vocabulary is used, although there may be some errors in form and usage.

Prototype task**Strange True Stories**

Police arrested James Haskell, seventeen, in March after he tried to buy beer at Wally's Mini-Mart by using a stolen driver's license—that of Douglas Cleaver. The man behind the counter at Wally's knew it was stolen because he is Douglas Cleaver, who had had his license taken in a truck break-in two months earlier. Haskell fled when he heard Cleaver talking to the police but left his wallet, which contained his real driver's license.

adapted from *The Los Angeles Reader*, June 2, 1994

Imagine you are Douglas Cleaver. Write a letter to a friend explaining the strange thing that happened to you at Wally's Mini-Mart. The letter has been started for you.

Dear Chris,
You won't believe what happened to me the other day!

Prototype task notes

The audience is personal (a friend) and the purpose is to communicate details of a strange event.

The test taker needs to use the information from the text in the response, although it must be transformed in person (third to first), in register (from journalistic to informal) and in ordering the events, which also requires transforming the syntax.

Model response: Level A

Dear Chris,

You won't believe what happened to me the other day!

When I worked at Wally's Mini-Mart, someone tried to buy beer. I asked him to show me his driver's license. This driver's license wasn't real. Do you know why I could know it wasn't real?

This driver's license was mine!! so, when I called the police, the guy heard I talking to the police and ran away.

Fortunately the guy was arrested by police. Be careful your wallet. Next person may be you!!

Model response: Level B

Dear Chris,

You won't believe what happened to me the other day! As you know, last January my wallet with my driver's license was stolen. I have almost forgotten about that event. But imagine how I was surprised when I saw my driver's license again! One teenager wanted to buy beer in the Mini-Mart where I work. He showed me his driver's license, and I saw my own name in it. I called the police at once, but that little thief fled when he heard me talking to the police. I think he was very frightened because he even forgot to take his own wallet in a hurry. There was his driver's license in that wallet. Of course, he was arrested very soon.

If somebody had told me before that such event could happen with me, I wouldn't have believed because I don't believe in coincidences, but it did happen. I wanted to write you about it. What do you think about it? I'll wait for your letter.

Douglas.

Task Type GN3**Test level**

Level B

Stimulus attributes

The task is to write an institutional letter that fulfills a suasive function drawing upon personal experience.

The primary text is a paragraph or multi-paragraph passage appropriate for Level B test takers.

The language of the writing prompt is simple and clear, using structures and vocabulary appropriate for students entering intermediate low.

A facsimile of a ruled sheet of paper containing fifteen to twenty lines is provided for the test taker's response and includes a salutation and opening sentence to orient the test taker to the task.

Response attributes

The test taker must generate an appropriate response to the writing task in the space provided. The responses are scored by trained raters using a clearly articulated scoring rubric.

The model response is a series of related sentences that form one or more paragraphs and fulfill all the task requirements. Most ideas are effectively integrated and developed. The model response contains a variety of simple and complex structures with few or no errors in simple structures and possibly some errors with complex structures. Advanced vocabulary is used, although there may be some errors in form and usage.

Prototype task**City News**

Thursday, June 23, 1994

**Person of the Week**

City News' Person of the Week is adult school student Oscar Rodriguez, whose dream came true last week when he received his high school diploma after six years of study at City Adult School.

Rodriguez said his primary motivation for graduating was his 17-year-old daughter, who becomes a high school senior this fall. "I wanted to have my diploma first," the 35-year-old student explained.

Rodriguez, who attended classes at the adult school to

learn English and become a U.S. citizen, accomplished two feats in one year: getting his high school diploma and being named Citizen of the Year by the State Consortium for Adult Education.

Rodriguez came to the United States 14 years ago from Guatemala. At that time, he felt no immediate need to learn English since the people he spent time with spoke primarily Spanish and he listened to Spanish radio and TV.

Later, he realized he needed to learn English in order to get his high school diploma. So, in 1988 he enrolled in City Adult School where he proved to be a very diligent and focused student. He found time to study and participate in community activities while working two jobs and raising a family.

According to Consortium president Gerry Delaney, "The adult school is full of students like Rodriguez who have many responsibilities, but Rodriguez

stands out because he always gets the job done with a smile and in a timely fashion." The Consortium acknowledged Rodriguez' accomplishments by giving him the Citizen of the Year award.

"I feel proud. I wanted to do this as an example for my kids," said Rodriguez, who has another daughter, age 7, and two sons, 15 and 10.

In fact, Rodriguez has set a good example not only at school but at work. Last year he was named Most Outstanding Employee at County Hospital where he works as a nurses' aide.

Receiving his diploma is only the first step to other ambitions for Rodriguez, who plans to continue his work in the medical field. "Now I want to go to college so I can become a nurse."

City News congratulates Oscar Rodriguez and wishes him continued success.

adapted from *Culver City News*, June 23, 1994

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Who would you choose to be Person of the Week? Write a letter to *City News* about a friend, family member, or someone in the news who you think should be the next Person of the Week. Explain your reasons for recommending this person. The letter has been started for you.

Dear City News Editor:

I would like to recommend
next Person of the Week.

as the

Prototype task notes

The audience is institutional (a newspaper) and the purpose is to persuade the newspaper to select the proposed nominee.

The test taker must use personal experience to develop a persuasive argument. Information from the text is not needed per se, although some of the ideas, vocabulary, and syntax may be transformed and used.

Model response

Dear City News Editor:

I would like to recommend Mr. Robert ~~Thomas~~ as the next Person of the Week.

Robert is a classmate of mine in ^{the} ~~English~~ Evening Adult school. He came from China three years ago. Since then, he has ^{worked} two jobs and has four children and parents to take care of. Busy as he is, he still sticks to his computer study and attends the class every day. He learns computer skills so quickly because he can understand English very well but things were different when he was immigrated here at first. All these years, he only sleeps 4 hours a day for his English study. He says, "How can I work well in an English-speaking country without knowing English?" So with great effort, he has improved himself step by step. Now he is not only good at English but also computer skills. And what's more important, he always encourages the other students to work hard. No matter who has any problem, Robert will lend his helping hand. So everyone of us likes him. We recommend that Mr. Robert ~~Thomas~~ as the next Person of the Week. He is our bright example.

Task Type GN4**Test level**

Level B

Stimulus attributes

The task is to write an institutional letter that fulfills a suasive function using specific information presented in a secondary text.

The primary text is a paragraph or multi-paragraph passage appropriate for Level B test takers.

The secondary text is a display such as a table or a list containing four to six pieces of specific information about the situation introduced in the prompt.

The language of the prompt and secondary text is simple and clear, using structures and vocabulary appropriate for students entering intermediate low. Information in the secondary text is presented in words and short phrases, not complete sentences.

A facsimile of a ruled sheet of paper containing fifteen to twenty lines is provided for the test taker's response and includes a salutation and opening sentence to orient the test taker to the task.

Response attributes

The test taker must generate an appropriate response to the writing task in the space provided. The responses are scored by trained raters using a clearly articulated scoring rubric.

The model response is a series of related sentences that form one or more paragraphs and fulfill all the task requirements. Most ideas are effectively integrated and developed. The model response contains a variety of simple and complex structures with few or no errors in simple structures and possibly some errors with complex structures. Advanced vocabulary is used, although there may be some errors in form and usage.

Prototype task

City News

Thursday, June 23, 1994

**Person of the Week**

City News' Person of the Week is adult school student Oscar Rodriguez, whose dream came true last week when he received his high school diploma after six years of study at City Adult School.

Rodriguez said his primary motivation for graduating was his 17-year-old daughter, who becomes a high school senior this fall. "I wanted to have my diploma first," the 35-year-old student explained.

Rodriguez, who attended classes at the adult school to

learn English and become a U.S. citizen, accomplished two feats in one year: getting his high school diploma and being named Citizen of the Year by the State Consortium for Adult Education.

Rodriguez came to the United States 14 years ago from Guatemala. At that time, he felt no immediate need to learn English since the people he spent time with spoke primarily Spanish and he listened to Spanish radio and TV.

Later, he realized he needed to learn English in order to get his high school diploma. So, in 1988 he enrolled in City Adult School where he proved to be a very diligent and focused student. He found time to study and participate in community activities while working two jobs and raising a family.

According to Consortium president Gerry Delaney, "The adult school is full of students like Rodriguez who have many responsibilities, but Rodriguez

stands out because he always gets the job done with a smile and in a timely fashion." The Consortium acknowledged Rodriguez' accomplishments by giving him the Citizen of the Year award.

"I feel proud. I wanted to do this as an example for my kids," said Rodriguez, who has another daughter, age 7, and two sons, 15 and 10.

In fact, Rodriguez has set a good example not only at school but at work. Last year he was named Most Outstanding Employee at County Hospital where he works as a nurses' aide.

Receiving his diploma is only the first step to other ambitions for Rodriguez, who plans to continue his work in the medical field. "Now I want to go to college so I can become a nurse."

City News congratulates Oscar Rodriguez and wishes him continued success.

adapted from *Culver City News*, June 23, 1994

Person of the Week: Jane Jeun Kim

Year	Event
1964	Born in Korea
1985	Arrival in the United States
1986-1988	Medical assistant training program
1989-present	Medical assistant at City Family Clinic
1991-present	Korean-American Youth Services volunteer
1993-present	Instructor of community first-aid classes

I would like to recommend Jane Jun Kim as the next Person of the Week.

Prototype task notes

The audience is institutional (a newspaper) and the purpose is to persuade the newspaper to select the given nominee.

The test taker must use information provided in the secondary text in the responses but must also go beyond simply repeating the information to develop a persuasive argument. Some of the vocabulary needed to fulfill the task may be taken from the secondary text, but it must be incorporated into the test taker's own language. Information from the primary text per se is not needed, although some of the vocabulary and syntax may be transformed and used.

Model response

Dear City News Editor:

I would like to recommend Jane Joun Kim as the next Person of the Week.

She was born in Korea in 1964. When Jane was 21, she came to the United States. After one year she decided to become a medical assistant, so she started to attend the medical assistant training program. In two years she successfully completed this program and got a job as a medical assistant at City Family Clinic, where she still works.

One year ago Jane got another job as an instructor of community first-aid classes where everyone is glad to learn from her. In addition, she is a volunteer in Korean-American Youth Services where she helps teenagers from Korea

to overcome many problems of adaptation to the new life in the new country. She really cares about other people and spends much time with them. I think she deserves to be noticed and be named Person of the Week.

Sincerely yours, Julia

GN Notes

1. A variant of task type GN1 was pretested in which the test taker was instructed to tell a friend about the concerts and invite him to go on a specific day. This task was less successful because the test taker could simply copy much of the information from the primary text to fulfill the task.
2. Writing tasks GN3 and GN4 are variants of the same task drawing on different sources of informational content. Pilot testing the examples showed advantages and disadvantages of each task type. (See Kahn, forthcoming, for a detailed discussion).

Scoring GN Tasks

Overview

This section presents recommended procedures for holistically scoring writing tasks that require the test taker to produce a sample of at least one paragraph in length.

The section is organized as follows. First, recommended scoring procedures are discussed. Then, Level A and Level B scoring rubrics are provided including a description of rubric features and an explanation of how the rubrics function.

Scoring procedures

Each writing sample is scored independently by two trained raters. (See Appendix E for recommended training procedures.)

Scores are recorded using numbers associated with Model Standards proficiency levels (i.e., 1 = BL, 2 = BH, 3 = IL, 4 = IH, 5 = AL, 6 = AH). If the two scores are within one point, the scores are averaged. If the two scores are more than one point apart, the sample should be read by a third trained rater to determine the appropriate score assignment. If a third rater is not available, the two raters should discuss the sample and come to agreement about the score assignment.

Level A Rubric

The Level A rubric is designed to assess test-taker performance on writing tasks targeted from beginning low through intermediate high. Writing ability is assessed on two major dimensions: task fulfillment (columns) and language (rows).

Task fulfillment refers to the degree to which the test taker successfully completes the requirements of the task. Decisions about task fulfillment fall into three categories: complete, partial, and not at all. These categories are defined below.

Not at all: None of the task requirements are fulfilled

Partial: Some requirements of the task are fulfilled, but others are either not fulfilled adequately or are not addressed

Complete: All requirements of the task are fulfilled

Language is evaluated based on the following characteristics:

- (a) amount of text generated by the test taker
- (b) amount of language copied from prompt or text
- (c) paragraph development
- (d) use of complex structures and advanced vocabulary
- (e) control over simple structures

Raters determine the degree of task fulfillment and find the band of language descriptors that best fits the sample of writing. The cell at which decisions on these two dimensions intersect corresponds to a proficiency level. For example, a writing sample that fulfills some requirements of the task (partial column) and contains language consisting of simple sentences that form a loosely-organized paragraph (third row from the bottom) would be given a score of 3 (IL), as indicated in the cell where the column and row intersect.

If the test taker fulfills all requirements of the task and the writing sample demonstrates good control over simple structures and contains some complex structures and advanced vocabulary, the test taker should be retested with Level B tasks to determine appropriate placement, as indicated in the cell where the complete column and the top row intersect.

Level A Rubric

Language	Task Fulfillment	Not at all	Partial	Complete
• variety of simple sentences; complex sentences usually attempted • advanced vocabulary and complex verb tenses; some errors in form and usage • few errors in simple structures; frequent errors in complex structures OR more proficient				retest Level B
• related sentences form a simple sequential paragraph • complex structures attempted; some errors still present in simple structures • a few words or phrases may be directly copied from prompt or text but they are usually incorporated into test taker's own language		3 (IL)	4 (IH)	4 (IH)
• simple related sentences form a short, loosely organized paragraph; errors may be frequent • some words, phrases, or sentences may be directly copied from prompt or text, but enough student generated language to evaluate		2 (BH)	3 (IL)	3 (IL)
• one or two simple, student generated sentences; sentences may not be related; errors are frequent • several words, phrases, or sentences may be directly copied from prompt or text, but not enough student generated language to evaluate		2 (BH)	2 (BH)	
• less than a single sentence; words or phrases may not be related • sample may contain isolated words or phrases directly copied from prompt or text OR no response		1 (BL)		

Task Fulfillment Definitions

Not at all: None of the task requirements are fulfilled

Partial: Some requirements of the task are fulfilled, but others are either not fulfilled adequately or are not addressed

Complete: All requirements of the task are fulfilled

Level B Rubric

The Level B rubric is designed to assess test-taker performance on writing tasks targeted from intermediate low through advanced high. Writing ability is assessed on two major dimensions: task fulfillment/content development (columns) and language (rows).

Task fulfillment refers to the degree to which the test taker successfully completes the requirements of the task. Content development refers to how well the test taker develops and integrates ideas. Decisions about task fulfillment/content development fall into four categories: complete, partial, minimal, and insufficient. These categories are defined below.

- Insufficient: Few, if any, of the task requirements are fulfilled; ideas are not integrated or developed
- Minimal: Some requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are loosely integrated but may lack development
- Partial: Most requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are usually integrated and developed
- Complete: All requirements of the task are fulfilled; most ideas are effectively integrated and developed

Language is evaluated based on the following characteristics:

- (a) balance between simple and complex sentences
- (b) use of complex verb tenses and advanced vocabulary
- (c) control over simple and complex structures
- (d) amount of language copied from prompt or text

Raters determine the degree of task fulfillment/content development and find the band of language descriptors that best fits the sample of writing. The cell at which decisions on these two dimensions intersect corresponds to a proficiency level. For example, a writing sample that fulfills some requirements of the task while loosely integrating ideas without much development (minimal column) and contains language consisting of predominantly simple sentences with some attempt at complex verb tenses (third row from the bottom) would be given a score of 4 (IH), as indicated in the cell where the column and row intersect.

If the test taker fulfills few requirements of the task and the writing sample contains predominantly copied text or just a few simple sentences, the test taker should be retested with Level A tasks to determine appropriate placement, as indicated in the cell where the insufficient column and the bottom row intersect.

Level B Rubric

Language	Task Fulfillment/Content Development			
	Insufficient	Minimal	Partial	Complete
• variety of simple and complex sentences • advanced vocabulary and complex verb tenses; few errors in form and usage • few if any errors in simple structures; some errors in complex structures			5 (AL)	6 (AH)
• variety of simple sentences; complex sentences usually attempted • advanced vocabulary and complex verb tenses; some errors in form and usage • few errors in simple structures; frequent errors in complex structures		4 (IH)	5 (AL)	5 (AL)
• predominantly simple sentences; some complex sentences may be attempted • some attempt to use advanced vocabulary and complex verb tenses; may be frequent errors in form and usage • some errors in simple structures; frequent errors in complex structures	3 (IL)	4 (IH)	4 (IH)	
• simple sentences only • frequent errors in student generated language • some copying from prompt or text	3 (IL)	3 (IL)		
• one or two student generated sentences; simple structures only • frequent errors in student generated language • several words, phrases, or sentences directly copied from prompt or text	retest Level A			

Task Fulfillment/Content Development Definitions

Insufficient: Few, if any, of the task requirements are fulfilled; ideas are not integrated or developed

Minimal: Some requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are loosely integrated but may lack development

Partial: Most requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are usually integrated and developed

Complete: All requirements of the task are fulfilled; most ideas are effectively integrated and developed

Listening Specifications

General Overview

The listening specifications are divided into two sections:

- Listening text specifications
- Listening item specifications

Each section is organized as follows. First there is an overview page which presents the general organization and defines critical terms used in the section. Then, specifications are presented including prototypes that exemplify the text or item types being defined. A brief description of each section is provided below.

Listening text specifications

Listening text specifications begin with general guidelines for text selection, adaptation, and development. The specifications for the following text types abstracted from the Model Standards and validated for placement are then presented: Monologue (short, medium, long, and extended) and Dialogue (short, medium, long, and extended).

Listening item specifications

Listening item specifications are organized by skill. The following listening skills were abstracted from the Model Standards for placement:¹² Extract Specific Information, Draw Meaning, Extract Global Information, and Make Inferences. For each skill, multiple item types are specified.

¹²Listening skills were reviewed and initially validated for placement by working group members. This process led to several recommendations in the categorization and definition of listening skills which are reflected in the listening item specifications. The existing definitions, however, were not validated by the working group and thus must be systematically reviewed by the advisory committee as part of the validation process.

Listening Text Specifications

Overview

For the purposes of these specifications, listening texts are categorized along two primary dimensions: the number of speakers and length of the aural input. These two dimensions are critical in specifying the listening text types and are discussed below.

Number of speakers

A listening text is either a monologue, a text spoken by one person, or a dialogue, an interaction between two speakers. The number of speakers has implications for the nature of the language contained in the text, both in terms of sentence-level features such as complexity of syntax and degree of formality and in terms of text organization.

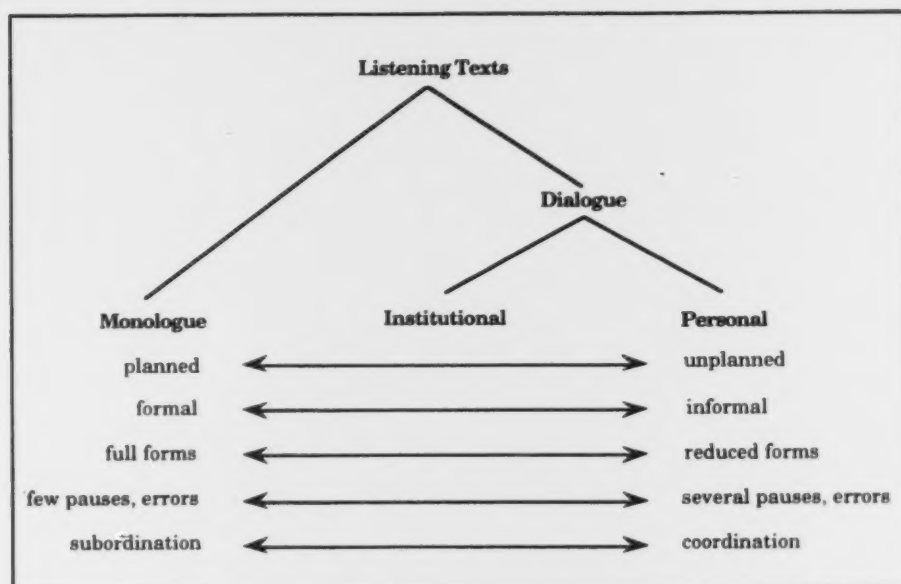
In general, monologues are characterized by planned, formal speech with full forms and few pauses or errors. Discourse is connected through subordination as well as coordination. Monologues are further differentiated by genre, with text types ranging from short announcements to lectures or speeches. Lengthy monologues tend to be organized like written texts, with clearly identifiable main ideas and a coherent progression of ideas.

With dialogues it is important to make an additional distinction between institutional and personal interactions. An institutional interaction is a dialogue between two people in clearly defined roles such as: doctor and patient, clerk and customer, teacher and student. The content of the institutional interaction is clearly related to the roles of the speakers, and the interaction is somewhat predictable in that the types of questions and answers are restricted to those that typically occur in a particular context (doctor's office, post office, etc.). By contrast, a personal interaction is a dialogue between two people who are not in specific institutional roles. The content of a personal interaction is therefore not tied to the roles of the speakers. It may be related to any aspect of daily life and may not follow any particular structure.

The distinction between personal and institutional interactions has implications for the type of language contained in the dialogue. Personal dialogues are often characterized by unplanned, informal speech, with frequent reduced forms, pauses, and occasional errors. Discourse is connected primarily through coordination with little use of subordination. Institutional dialogues tend to be somewhat more formal than personal dialogues, though they are generally less formal than monologues.

Figure 3 provides a visual representation of language characteristics typically found in monologues and dialogues.

Figure 3
Language Characteristics of Monologues and Dialogues



Length of aural input

The length refers to the amount of text the listener hears. For the listening text specifications in this document, length is determined by the total number of words. The following operational definitions of length are used:

- Short:** fewer than 50 words
- Medium:** 50-100 words
- Long:** 101-250 words
- Extended:** 251-350 words

There are thus eight possible text types based on these two dimensions (number of speakers and length): short, medium, long, and extended monologues, and short, medium, long, and extended dialogues.

Figure 4 below summarizes the eight listening text types and provides several examples of monologue genres.

Figure 4
Listening Text Types

Length	Monologue (Example Genres)	Dialogue
Short (<50 words)	Single Sentence Brief Recorded Message Announcement	Short Interaction
Medium (50-100 words)	Recorded Message Public announcement Brief report	Medium Interaction
Long (100-250 words)	Speech Lecture Report	Long Interaction
Extended (250-350 words)	Speech Lecture Report	Extended Interaction

The text specifications for short, medium, long, and extended monologues and dialogues are organized as follows. First, general guidelines for listening text selection, adaptation, and development are presented. Then, specifications for each text type are provided. The specifications include the following:

General description

A brief definition of the text type

Length

Monologue: The recommended number of words

Dialogue: The recommended number of words and turns

A turn is defined as the uninterrupted speech of a single person. Each turn is between one and four clauses in length (no more than 40 words).

Number of passes

The number of times the test taker hears the listening text

A short or medium text is heard one time only. A long text is heard twice in its entirety. An extended text is heard once in its entirety and then a second time in segments.

Number of items per text

The recommended number of test items associated with the text in an operational form of a test

Note: For a given text, as many items as possible should be drafted and pretested in order to generate a sufficient number of acceptable items for an operational form of a test.

Target level

The Model Standards proficiency levels at which a listening text type is targeted

The target level of a listening text depends on the text length and the language in the text. Listening texts associated with more than one item should include vocabulary and structures targeted at several levels.

Language is defined as targeted at a given level when test takers at that level are presumed to be able to interpret the language, while test takers at the next lower level are not.

Test level

An indication of whether the text type is appropriate for Level A tests or Level B tests

Skills

The listening skills that can be tested using the text type

Prototype listening text

A listening text that exemplifies the text type¹³

All prototype texts were pilot tested in the form in which they are presented and were found to be promising as models for placement test development based on content considerations and feedback from teachers and students.

Prototype listening text notes

Explanatory notes about the prototype text that include a discussion of the text vis-à-vis the specified text attributes

¹³All information presented aurally to the test taker is shown in italics.

Text Selection, Adaptation, and Development

Listening texts are either (a) selected from existing recordings, (b) adapted from existing recordings and re-recorded, or (c) developed for testing purposes. The following general guidelines should be adhered to in producing all listening texts.

1. All listening texts should be professional audiotape recordings based on materials originally prepared for a general English-speaking audience and not for language learning or assessment purposes.
2. Listening texts should be drawn from general content areas that are familiar to adult ESL students given their goals and experiences. General topics include but are not limited to shopping, banking, housing, health, transportation, current events, and community resources. Some common vocational topics such as employment and general workplace safety may also be appropriate.
3. Care must be taken to select topics that will not quickly become dated or that critically depend on background knowledge of specific people or events.
4. The language of the speaker(s) should be standard American English spoken at a natural rate with standard pronunciation. Speakers can be either male or female. If there is more than one speaker, it is preferable to have one male and one female.
5. The appropriateness of a text for a given level depends in part on factors such as familiarity of topic, visual aids, and complexity of content, vocabulary, or syntax, as specified in the Model Standards. All texts must be reviewed by content-area experts familiar with the Model Standards to evaluate their appropriateness for use at specific proficiency levels.
6. Permission must be obtained to use a selected or adapted text on an operational test. The source of the text must be acknowledged on all test forms.

7. An adapted text should remain as close to its original format as possible, although the following adaptations may be made:
 - (a) Brand names, other proper nouns, addresses, and telephone numbers should be changed to avoid association with actual people, organizations, places, and so on.
 - (b) A text may be shortened or edited for simplicity and clarity, or to make a given item type possible. On a Level A text, the language may be simplified in places, as long as the text retains a natural flow.
 - (c) Visual stimuli may be added to the test booklet to help orient the test taker to the listening text.
8. A developed text should be based on authentic materials or real-life situations. A monologue can be developed based on information presented in a written text. For example, a broadcast can be based on information found in a newspaper, and a lecture can be based on information presented in a textbook. In scripting the text, care must be taken to use language appropriate for the genre being developed. A dialogue can be developed based on a simulation of a personal or institutional situation. It is preferable to have two people role-play the situation several times without a written script and base the final recording script on the transcripts of the role plays, rather than beginning with an invented script.

Short Monologue

General description

A short monologue consists of one to four sentences spoken by a single speaker in which no more than two or three pieces of specific information are presented. Short monologues include single sentence descriptions, brief announcements, and brief telephone messages.

Length

Fewer than 50 words

Number of passes

One

Number of items per text

One

Target level

Beginning low through intermediate low

Test level

Appropriate for Level A tests and as a warm-up only for Level B tests

Skills

Extract specific information

Prototype text

Thank you for calling the Metro Bus. All of our information staff are busy at the moment. Please hold, and your call will be answered as soon as possible. Thank you.

Prototype text notes

The listening text consists of three sentences (24 words) and represents a typical outgoing message heard on an institutional answering machine. The example text is targeted primarily at the beginning levels and is thus appropriate for Level A tests and as a warm-up for Level B tests.

Medium Monologue

General description

A medium monologue consists of five to ten sentences spoken by a single speaker in which at least six pieces of specific information are presented. Medium monologues include telephone messages, public announcements, and brief television and radio broadcasts.

Length

Between 50 and 100 words

Number of passes

One

Number of items per text

Between three and six (fewer items than pieces of information).

Target level

Beginning high through advanced high

Test level

Appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests

Skills

Extract specific information

Prototype text

Hello, you have reached the Children's Zoo. The zoo is located in Adams Park at the intersection of Pacific and Main. We are open daily from ten a.m. to five p.m. The zoo is closed on Christmas Day only. Admission prices are: adults ages 13 and over, eight dollars; children ages two through 12, three dollars; senior citizens ages 65 and over, five dollars; and children under two are admitted free.

Prototype text notes

The listening text consists of five sentences (71 words) and represents a typical outgoing message heard on an institutional answering machine. It contains several pieces of specific information including location, hours, and admission prices. The example text is targeted primarily at the intermediate levels and is thus appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests.

Long Monologue

General description

A long monologue consists of one to three paragraphs spoken by a single speaker in which several pieces of information are presented. Long monologues include short speeches, lectures, and broadcasts.

Length

Between 100 and 250 words

Number of passes

Two

Number of items per text

Between four and six

Target level

Intermediate low through advanced high

Test level

Appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests

Skills

Extract specific information

Draw meaning

Make inferences

Prototype text

A long monologue was not developed as part of the prototyping effort. To complete this specification, a long monologue that could serve as a prototype text should be drafted and pilot tested.

Extended Monologue

General description

An extended monologue consists of four to eight related paragraphs (250 to 350 total words), which for testing purposes is divided into two to three segments. Each segment consists of two to four paragraphs (50 to 200 words). Care should be taken to segment the text at points that represent a natural break so that content unity is maintained.

An extended monologue is heard once in its entirety and the test taker answers one global question about the text. Then the monologue is heard a second time in segments. After each segment, the test taker answers between one and four questions about the segment just heard. These questions may require the test taker to extract specific information, draw meaning, or make inferences.

Figure 5 below summarizes this information.

Figure 5
Characteristics of Extended Monologues

	Entire Monologue	Each Segment
Length	Between 250 and 350 words	Between 50 and 200 words
Number of passes	One	One
Number of items	One	Level A: One Level B: No more than four
Skills	Extract global information	Extract specific information Draw meaning Make inferences

Target level

Intermediate low through advanced high

Test level

Appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests

Prototype text

Philip Vera Cruz passed away in Bakersfield, California yesterday. He was 89 years old. Vera Cruz was a migrant worker who became a political activist and labor organizer in California. He is best remembered as an organizer of Filipino workers and co-founder of the United Farm Workers Union.

Vera Cruz immigrated from the Philippines when he was 22 years old, hoping to get a good job and an education. However, like many other Filipino immigrants who came to the United States in the 1920s, he was only able to find low-paying jobs in factories, canneries, and fields. Because these jobs were short-term, Vera Cruz had to move frequently in order to find work: cutting boxes in a factory in Washington, canning fish in Alaska, and picking grapes in California.

Vera Cruz was paid very little, yet he sent most of the money he earned to his family in the Philippines. He never married, fearing that if he had his own family to take care of in the States, he would not be able to help his family in the Philippines.

Vera Cruz attended college briefly, but his limited income and commitment to supporting his family made it impossible for him to realize his dream of becoming a lawyer. He did, however, succeed in making education possible for his family: he helped his sister, his brother, and all his brother's children go to college.

Vera Cruz was angered by the low wages, long hours, and poor living standards of migrant workers, and in the mid-1960s helped organize the Filipino workers to fight for improved working conditions. In 1965 he joined forces with Cesar Chavez to establish the United Farm Workers Union, where he served as vice president until 1977. Because of his deep concern for workers and anger at the way they were treated, Vera Cruz dedicated his life to fighting for social justice and equality. He will be remembered as a great leader and activist.

Prototype text notes

The listening text is a news report consisting of five paragraphs (330 total words) that retells important events in a famous person's life. The example text is targeted primarily at the advanced levels and is thus appropriate for Level B tests. There are two segments of 132 and 197 words respectively.

Short Dialogue

General description

A short dialogue is a brief personal or institutional interaction between two speakers containing fewer than 50 words and a maximum of three turns.

Length

Words: Fewer than 50

Turns: Between two and three

Number of passes

One

Target level

Beginning low through beginning high

Test level

Appropriate for Level A tests only

Number of items per text

One

Skills

Extract specific information

Prototype text

Speaker 1: *What's wrong?*

Speaker 2: *I can't find my sunglasses.*

Prototype text notes

The listening text represents a simple personal exchange. There are two turns and seven words. The example text is targeted at the beginning levels and is appropriate for Level A tests only.

Medium Dialogue

General description

A medium dialogue is a personal or institutional interaction between two speakers containing 50 to 100 words and 4 to 10 turns.

Length

Words: Between 50 and 100

Turns: Between 4 and 10

Number of passes

One

Target level

Intermediate low through advanced high

Test level

Appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests

Number of items per text

Between three and five

Skills

Extract specific information

Draw meaning

Prototype text

A medium dialogue was not developed as part of the prototyping effort. To complete this specification, a medium dialogue that could serve as a prototype text should be drafted and pilot tested.

Long Dialogue

General description

A long dialogue is a personal or institutional interaction between two speakers containing 100 to 250 words and 6 to 20 turns.

Length

Words: Between 100 and 250

Turns: Between 6 and 20

Number of passes

Two (each time in its entirety)

Target level

Intermediate low through advanced high

Test level

Appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests

Number of items per text

Between three and five

Skills

Extract specific information

Draw meaning

Make inferences

Prototype text

- Doctor: *Everything seems fine, but her throat's a little red. I want to take a throat culture to make sure she doesn't have an infection.*
- Mother: *Okay. So, um, how long will it take for the test results to come back?*
- Doctor: *We should have the results in two days. You should call us then to see if they're ready.*
- Mother: *All right. So, she might have a throat infection. You're going to do a test and I should call you back in two days to see what the results are.*
- Doctor: *Uh-huh. And if she does have a throat infection I'll prescribe some antibiotics at that time.*
- Mother: *Okay. What should I do in the meantime?*
- Doctor: *You can get some children's Tylenol at the pharmacy. Give it to her every four to six hours until her fever has gone down. She should continue to drink a lot of liquids and get plenty of rest.*
- Mother: *Okay. How long should I keep her out of school?*
- Doctor: *You can let her go back to school when her temperature is normal and she's feeling better.*
- Mother: *Okay. Should I schedule a follow-up appointment?*
- Doctor: *I don't think it's necessary at this time, but if her symptoms don't improve in a few days, I would like to see her again.*
- Mother: *All right. That sounds good. Thank you very much, Doctor Li.*

Prototype text notes

The text is an institutional interaction between a doctor and a patient's mother. There are 12 turns and 221 words. The example text is targeted primarily at the intermediate levels and is thus appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests.

Extended Dialogue

General description

An extended dialogue is a personal or institutional interaction between two speakers consisting of 250 to 350 words (between 25 and 40 turns), which is divided into two to four segments consisting of 50 to 150 words (between 5 and 20 turns). Care should be taken to segment the text at points that represent a natural break so that content unity is maintained.

An extended dialogue is heard once in its entirety and the test taker answers one global question about the interaction. Then the text is heard a second time in segments. After each segment, the test taker answers between one and three questions about the segment heard. These questions may require the test taker to extract specific information, draw meaning, or make inferences.

Figure 6 below summarizes this information.

Figure 6
Characteristics of Extended Dialogues

	Entire Dialogue	Each Segment
Length	Between 250 and 350 words Between 25 and 40 turns	Between 50 and 150 words Between 5 and 20 turns
Number of passes	One	One
Number of items	One	Level A: One Level B: No more than three
Skills	Extract global information	Extract specific information Draw meaning Make inferences

Target level

Intermediate low through advanced high

Test level

Appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests

Prototype text

Doctor: *Good morning, I'm Dr. Li.*
Mother: *Hi Dr. Li, I'm Mrs. Johnson.*
Doctor: *So, what brings you here today?*
Mother: *Well, my daughter hasn't been feeling well and I'm a little concerned.*
Doctor: *Okay. Well, what's your daughter's name?*
Mother: *Natalie.*
Doctor: *And how old is she?*
Mother: *She's five years old.*
Doctor: *Okay. And what are her symptoms?*
Mother: *She has a sore throat and a fever.*
Doctor: *How long has she been sick?*
Mother: *Well, let's see. Her sore throat started a few days ago and last night when I took her temperature she had a slight fever.*
Doctor: *All right. Has she been eating normally?*
Mother: *More or less, but it's been a little hard for her to eat. Her throat is really sore and it hurts when she swallows.*
Doctor: *How has she been acting?*
Mother: *A little tired. She's been sleeping more than she usually does.*

.....

Doctor: *Okay. What have you been doing for Natalie?*
Mother: *Well, we kept her home from school yesterday and made sure she got plenty of rest.*
Doctor: *Anything else?*
Mother: *We gave her a lot of juice and water to drink.*
Doctor: *Have you given her any medicine?*
Mother: *No, not yet.*
Doctor: *Okay. Are any of Natalie's friends at school sick?*
Mother: *Not that I know of.*
Doctor: *Is anyone else in the family sick?*
Mother: *Well, my son was home sick last week.*

.....

Doctor: *I see. Is she generally a healthy child?*
Mother: *Yes.*
Doctor: *Okay. Is she allergic to any medicines?*
Mother: *Not that I know of.*
Doctor: *Has she had any surgeries in the past?*
Mother: *No.*
Doctor: *Okay. Any medical problems in your family that I should be aware of?*
Mother: *No.*
Doctor: *Okay. I'm going to examine Natalie now.*

Prototype text notes

The listening text is an institutional interaction that takes place at a doctor's office. There are 35 turns and a total of 257 words. The text is divided into three segments of 131 words, 75 words, and 51 words respectively. The example text is targeted primarily at the intermediate levels and is thus appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests.

Listening Item Specifications Overview

Item specifications are provided for the listening skills below.

- Extract specific information (ES)
- Draw meaning (DM-L)
- Extract global information (EG)
- Make inferences (MI-L)

For each skill, an introductory page provides the following information:

General description

A brief definition of the skill as operationalized in item types

Text type

The aural stimulus (monologue or dialogue) on which listening items are based

Target level

The Model Standards proficiency levels at which items testing the skill are targeted

An item is defined as being targeted at a given level when test takers at that level are presumed to be able to answer the item correctly while test takers at the next lower level are not.

The target level of an item is dependent on both the skill being tested and the language that must be interpreted in the aural stimulus in order to answer the item.

Test level

An indication of whether the skill is essential or optional for placement on Level A tests and Level B tests

Note: Although a skill may be essential for both Level A and Level B tests, not all item types are appropriate for both levels. (See Test Level under individual item types for level appropriateness.)

Item types

A brief description of each item type testing the skill

The introductory page is followed by specifications for each item type associated with that skill. The specifications include the following information:

Item format

The format of the item type (fill in the blank, matching, multiple choice, select number correct, sequencing, unique answer)

Test level

An indication of whether the item type is appropriate for Level A and Level B tests

Stimulus attributes

The characteristics of the input to the test taker, which include:

- (a) specific information about the aural stimulus and, where appropriate, the visual stimulus
- (b) a detailed description of the item stem
- (c) an indication of where target-level language is found in the stimulus

Response attributes

The characteristics of the response

For constructed response items, a detailed description of the expected response is provided.

For selected response items, the following are specified:

- (a) number of response options
- (b) characteristics of the key (correct option)
- (c) characteristics of the distractors (incorrect options)
- (d) language characteristics of the response options, where appropriate

Prototype item or item set

An item or item set that exemplifies the item type including the aural stimulus and information found in the test booklet

The aural stimulus indicates what the test taker hears including the directions and, where appropriate, the item stem. All information presented aurally to the test taker is shown in italics.

Test booklet information includes the directions and, where appropriate, the item stem, the response options, and the visual stimulus.

Unless otherwise noted, all prototype items were pilot tested in the form in which they are presented and were found to be promising as models for placement test development based on statistical performance and content considerations.

The key is indicated by an asterisk (*) for selected response items.

Note: Directions are provided in both aural and written form. In pilot testing, written directions were as brief as possible to limit the amount of reading required and more extensive directions were provided aurally. Once whole tests are constructed this issue will need to be revisited to determine the most effective balance.

Prototype item notes

Explanatory notes about the prototype item include the following:

- (a) a discussion of the item vis-à-vis the specified stimulus and response attributes, including the target-level language
- (b) examples of acceptable and unacceptable responses for constructed response items
- (c) the estimated range and discrimination point for the item or item set based on pilot testing results

The estimated range indicates the proficiency levels at which the item seems most appropriate in terms of content and performance. The discrimination point indicates the two adjacent levels where the item seems to best differentiate student performance. (See Appendix B for criteria used to determine both estimated range and discrimination point.)

Note: Some prototype items were modified based on pilot testing results. For these items, the estimated range and discrimination point are not available because they have not been pilot tested in their current form.

Additional notes about the item types are provided at the end of each skill section. These notes include supplementary information about the item types from pre- and pilot testing, such as considerations for alternative item formats and variations in wording.

Extract Specific Information (ES)***General description***

The test taker listens for and identifies specific information in the form of a word or phrase within the text.

Text type

Short or medium monologue or dialogue
Segment of an extended monologue or dialogue

Target level

Beginning low through advanced high

Test level

Level A: essential
Level B: essential

Item types

- ES1 The test taker selects one of four pictures that corresponds to an object heard in a short text
- ES2 The test taker selects one of two numbers that corresponds to a piece of numerical information presented in a short text
- ES3 The test taker matches information presented in a series of short texts to scenes depicting the information described
- ES4 The test taker selects one of four specific actions that corresponds to an action stated in a short text
- ES5 The test taker writes down specific information heard in a medium text
- ES6 The test taker selects two of five pictures that answer a factual question about a long text or a segment of an extended text
- ES7 The test taker selects three of six options that answer a factual question about a long text or a segment of an extended text
- ES8 The test taker writes down a word or phrase that answers a factual question about a long text or a segment of an extended text

Item Type ES1***Item format***

Multiple choice (picture)

Test level

Appropriate for Level A tests, as a warm-up only

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is a short monologue or dialogue in which a single common object is mentioned once. The aural stimulus is heard one time only.

The aural stimulus contains target-level language.

Response attributes

A set of four pictures depicting common objects is printed next to an item number. The objects must be plausible in that any of them could be used in the text in place of the object mentioned. The test taker must circle the object referred to in the text.

Prototype item**Aural stimulus**

Listen to the conversation. What are the people talking about? Circle the correct picture.

Number one

Speaker 1: *What's wrong?*

Speaker 2: *I can't find my sunglasses.*

Test booklet

Circle the correct picture.

1.

**Prototype item notes**

The aural stimulus is a short dialogue. The test taker must recognize the word "sunglasses" and match it to the correct picture. The distractors are other objects that could be misplaced.

Estimated range: Easy for the population Discrimination point: BL-

Item Type ES2

Item format

Multiple choice

Test level

Appropriate for Level A tests only

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is a short monologue or dialogue containing a single piece of numerical information such as a telephone number or address. The aural stimulus is heard one time only.

The aural stimulus contains target-level language.

Response attributes

Two series of numbers are printed next to an item number. The key is the number mentioned in the text. The distractor differs from the key in that either one or two pairs of numbers from the key are transposed.

Prototype item**Aural stimulus**

Listen to the telephone message and circle the phone number you hear.

Number one

Hi. You've reached 452-2864. No one's here to get your call right now, but leave us a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can. Thanks for calling. Bye.

Test booklet

Circle the phone number you hear.

1. 452-2864* 542-8264

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus, a short monologue, is a brief telephone message. The test taker must identify the telephone number heard in the message. In the distractor, two pairs of numbers have been transposed (45 and 54; 28 and 82).

Estimated range: BL-IL

Discrimination point: BL-

*Item Type ES3**Item format*

Matching

Test level

Appropriate for Level A tests only

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is a series of short monologues or dialogues describing an action taking place within a visual stimulus. Before each monologue or dialogue is heard, the item number associated with it is stated. There are at least three short monologues or dialogues per visual.

The visual stimulus (drawing or photograph) is a scene showing several people engaged in different activities. Each person or group of people engaged in the same activity is marked with a letter (a, b, c, etc.). There are more scenes marked than short monologues or dialogues heard.

The aural stimulus contains target-level language.

Note: An example is provided to orient the test taker to the task.

Response attributes

A series of blanks corresponding to the number of monologues or dialogues is provided in the test booklet. The test taker must match the activity described in the aural stimulus with the letter corresponding to the scene depicting the activity by writing down the letter of the activity being described in the blank next to the item number.

Prototype item set**Aural stimulus**

Look at the drawing of the park. There are letters next to some of the pictures. Listen to the sentence and write the correct letter.

Key

- | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| d | Example: | He's reading the newspaper. |
| c | Number 1: | She's feeding the birds. |
| b | Number 2: | They're in love. |
| e | Number 3: | She's standing near the fountain. |
| a | Number 4: | There's a bird in the tree. |

Test booklet

Write the correct letter next to the number.



Example: d

1. 2. 3. 4.

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus, a series of short monologues, consists of a five single sentences that describe scenes depicted in the drawing of the park. The test taker must match the scene described in the sentence to the letter corresponding to the correct group of people or objects.

Estimated range: BL-IL (1,2,3,4) Discrimination point: BL/BH (1,2,4)
BH/IL (3)

Item Type ES4

Item format

Multiple choice

Test level

Appropriate for Level A tests and as a warm-up for Level B tests

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is a short monologue or dialogue containing an instruction for a specific action to take.

The aural stimulus contains target-level language.

Response attributes

A set of four actions (single words or phrases) is printed in the test booklet. The key is the action referred to in the aural stimulus. The three distractors are other plausible actions the listener could take.

The response options use words or phrases different from those heard in the aural stimulus, where possible, and contain language at a lower level than the target level.

Prototype item**Aural stimulus**

Listen to the message. What does the message tell you to do? Check the correct answer.

Thank you for calling the Metro Bus. All of our information staff are busy at the moment. Please hold, and your call will be answered as soon as possible. Thank you.

Test booklet

Check (✓) the correct answer.

- _____ wait*
- _____ call again later
- _____ leave a message
- _____ call a different number

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus, a short monologue, is a brief recorded telephone message which asks the listener to wait to be helped. The test taker must extract this information to find the correct answer. The distractors are plausible actions typically heard in telephone messages.

Estimated range: BH-AL

Discrimination point: IL/IH

Item Type ES5

Item format

Fill in the blank

Test level

Appropriate for Level A tests and as a warm-up for Level B tests

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is a medium monologue or dialogue containing several pieces of specific information consisting of a simple number, word, or phrase. The test booklet contains a visual stimulus which presents some of the information from the aural stimulus and provides blanks (between three and six) where information is to be filled in.

The aural stimulus contains target-level language. The visual stimulus contains words and phrases at a lower level.

Note: There should be fewer blanks than pieces of information.

Response attributes

A blank is provided for each piece of missing information. The test taker must write the missing information in the blank.

Prototype item set**Aural stimulus**

You will hear a telephone message about the Children's Zoo. You will hear the message one time only. Look at the information about the zoo. The hours and prices are missing. (Pause 15 seconds.) Now listen to the message and fill in the blanks.

Hello, you have reached the Children's Zoo. The zoo is located in Adams Park at the intersection of Pacific and Main. We are open daily from ten a.m. to five p.m. The zoo is closed on Christmas Day only. Admission prices are: adults ages 13 and over, eight dollars; children ages two through 12, three dollars; senior citizens ages 65 and over, five dollars; and children under two are admitted free.

Test booklet

Fill in the blanks.

 Children's Zoo 	
Location:	<u>Adams Park</u>
Hours:	<u> </u> a.m. to <u> </u> p.m.
Closed:	<u>Christmas Day</u>
Prices:	Price
Adults	<u>\$8</u>
Children	<u> </u> 3
Senior citizens	<u> </u> 4
Under 2 years	<u> </u> 5

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus, a medium monologue, is a recorded message containing several pieces of specific information. The visual stimulus is a facsimile of a note card containing blanks for the missing information. The test taker must listen for the missing hours and prices and write the information in the blanks provided.

Estimated range: BL-IH (1,2,3,4) Discrimination point: BL/BH (2,3,4)
 BH-IH (5) BH/IL (1, 5)

Item Type ES6**Item format**

Select two correct (pictures)

Test level

Appropriate for Level A tests only

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is a long monologue or dialogue or a segment of an extended monologue or dialogue. The text refers to two persons, objects, actions, or situations that can be concretely depicted in drawings or photographs. A long text is heard two times. A segment is heard one time after the extended text is heard in its entirety.

The item stem consists of a factual question about the text requiring the test taker to identify two correct answers. The item stem is heard on the tape and is written in the test booklet.

The segment contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

A set of five pictures depicting persons, objects, actions, or situations follows the item stem. Underneath each picture is a letter. The test taker must circle the letter of the two correct answers. The two keys are the pictures representing the persons, objects, actions, or situations mentioned in the segment. The three distractors represent persons, objects, actions, or situations that are plausibly related to the content of the segment but are not mentioned in the segment.

Prototype item**Aural stimulus**

Listen to the conversation and circle the two correct answers.

What's wrong with Natalie?

Doctor: *Okay. What are Natalie's symptoms?*

Mother: *She has a sore throat and a fever.*

Doctor: *How long has she been sick?*

Mother: *Well, let's see. Her sore throat started a few days ago and last night when I took her temperature, she had a slight fever.*

Doctor: *All right. Has she been eating normally?*

Mother: *More or less, but it's been a little hard for her to eat. Her throat is really sore and it hurts when she swallows.*

Doctor: *How has she been acting?*

Mother: *A little tired. She's been sleeping more than she usually does.*

Test booklet

Circle the **two (2)** correct answers.

What's wrong with Natalie?



a



b*



c



d*



e

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus is a segment of an extended institutional dialogue between a doctor and a child's mother. The test taker must listen to the segment to find the correct answers "sore throat" and "fever" which are repeated several times. The three distractors (backache, stomach ache, and broken arm) are not mentioned in the segment.

Estimated range: BL-IL

Discrimination point: BL/BH

Item Type ES7**Item format**

Select three correct

Test level

Appropriate for Level B tests only

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is a long monologue or dialogue or a segment of an extended monologue or dialogue. The text refers to three objects, actions or situations that can be described in a single word or phrase. A long text is heard two times. A segment is heard one time after the extended text is heard in its entirety.

The item stem consists of a factual question about the text requiring the test taker to identify three correct answers.

The segment contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

A set of six words or phrases appears below the question. Each word or phrase is preceded by a blank. The test taker must check the blank next to each of the three correct answers. The three keys are the words or phrases representing the three objects, actions, or situations mentioned in the segment. The keys may use the exact words found in the text or synonyms. The three distractors represent objects, actions, or situations that plausibly relate to the content of the segment but are not mentioned in the segment. The response options contain target-level language or language at the lower level.

Prototype item**Aural stimulus**

Read the question. Now, listen to the third part of the conversation and check the three correct answers.

Doctor: *I see. Is she generally a healthy child?*

Mother: *Yes.*

Doctor: *Okay. Is she allergic to any medicines?*

Mother: *Not that I know of.*

Doctor: *Has she had any surgeries in the past?*

Mother: *No.*

Doctor: *Okay. Any medical problems in your family that I should be aware of?*

Mother: *No.*

Doctor: *Okay. I'm going to examine Natalie now.*

Test booklet

Check (✓) the **three** (3) correct answers.

What information does Dr. Li ask for?

- _____ x-rays
- _____ allergies*
- _____ past surgeries*
- _____ immunizations
- _____ health insurance
- _____ family medical problems*

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus is a segment of an extended institutional dialogue between a doctor and a child's mother. The test taker must listen to the questions the doctor asks and indicate the correct answers. The three keys incorporate words and phrases heard in the dialogue. The three distractors are related to health care, but are not mentioned in the segment.

Estimated range: IL-AH

Discrimination point: IL/IH

Item Type ES8**Item format**

Unique answer

Test level

Appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is a long monologue or dialogue or a segment of an extended monologue or dialogue. The text contains several pieces of information which can be described in a single word or phrase. A long text is heard two times. A segment is heard one time after the extended text is heard in its entirety.

The item stem consists of a question asking for a piece of alphabetic or non-alphabetic information presented in the text. The question ordinarily begins with who, what, when, where, how much, or how many.

The segment contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

The test taker must write down the correct answer, which consists of a number, word, or phrase explicitly stated in the text. The test taker is not penalized for minor misspellings or grammatical errors as long as the meaning is clear.

Prototype item**Aural stimulus**

Listen to the first part of the news report and answer the question.

Philip Vera Cruz passed away in Bakersfield, California yesterday. He was 89 years old. Vera Cruz was a migrant worker who became a political activist and labor organizer in California. He is best remembered as an organizer of Filipino workers and co-founder of the United Farm Workers Union.

Vera Cruz immigrated from the Philippines when he was 22 years old, hoping to get a good job and an education. However, like many other Filipino immigrants who came to the United States in the 1920s, he was only able to find low-paying jobs in factories, canneries, and fields. Because these jobs were short-term, Vera Cruz had to move frequently in order to find work: cutting boxes in a factory in Washington, canning fish in Alaska, and picking grapes in California.

Test booklet

Answer the question.

What happened to Vera Cruz yesterday? _____

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus, a segment of an extended monologue, is the first part of a news report. The test taker must listen for a specific event and write down the correct answer. Example responses appear below.

Acceptable: He died; He passed away yesterday; Past away (minor spelling error); He dead (minor grammatical error)

Unacceptable: Bakersfield; 89 years old; moved to California; pass work

Estimated range: IH-AH

Discrimination point: AL/AH

ES Notes

1. A variant of item type ES4 which asked the test taker to identify a place or organization associated with a short monologue or dialogue was also pilot tested. The variation proved to be somewhat easier for test takers because the response options usually contained the same word or phrase heard in the text. Identifying an action, as in item type ES4, was more challenging in that the response options often incorporated words or phrases synonymous to but different from those heard in the text. This is an example of how modifying the content can affect the difficulty of an item.
2. Item type ES5 was pretested with an additional piece of missing information. The missing information was non-numeric and consisted of the two-word phrase, "Christmas Day." Pretesting results indicated that test takers needed too much time to write down the missing information which interfered with their ability to listen to the rest of the text and fill in the remaining missing information. These results suggest that it is best to request information that is either numeric or a short, familiar word or phrase when using this item type.
3. Scoring Prototype ES8 was complicated by the wide range of responses that test takers provided due in part to several spelling errors in the phrase "passed away." The range in errors underscored the complexity of assessing listening in an open-ended format in that the test taker can transcribe information without necessarily understanding the information retrieved. Although this was a concern, the scoring protocol was generous rather than restrictive in determining acceptable and unacceptable responses because a transcribed response indicates that the test taker understood the question and was able to isolate the portion of the text that addressed the issue. Pilot testing showed that developing a scoring protocol for item type ES8 requires systematic review of the responses. Even so, the item type is recommended for operational test because of its usefulness in discriminating at the upper levels.

Draw Meaning (DML)***General description***

The test taker will listen to a text and interpret an idea expressed in the text.

Drawing meaning differs from extracting specific information in that the listener cannot simply listen for a specific word or phrase from a stream of speech to answer an item. Rather, the listener must be able to construct meaning from what is said, which involves interpreting one or more of the following:

- vocabulary and sentence structure, including reduced forms
- cohesive devices, including pronoun reference, ellipses, and lexical cohesion
- intonation and stress

Text type

Medium or long monologue or dialogue

Segment of extended monologue or dialogue

Target level

Intermediate low through advanced high

Test level

Level A: essential

Level B: essential

Item types

In item type DML1, the test taker selects one of four pictures that depicts the answer to a factual question about a text. In item type DML2, the test taker selects one of four responses to a factual question about a text.

Item Type DML1**Item format**

Multiple choice (picture)

Test level

Appropriate for Level A tests only

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is a long monologue or dialogue or a segment of an extended monologue or dialogue. The text contains information about persons, objects, actions, or situations that can be concretely depicted in drawings or photographs. A long text is heard two times. A segment is heard one time after the extended text is heard in its entirety.

The item stem consists of a factual question about the text.

The aural stimulus contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

A set of four pictures depicting persons, objects, actions, or situations follows the item stem. Underneath each picture is a letter. The test taker must circle the letter of the correct answer. The key is a picture representing the person, object, action, or situation mentioned in the segment. The three distractors represent persons, objects, actions, or situations that plausibly relate to the content of the segment and could be described using words or phrases heard in the text but are inaccurate answers to the question.

Prototype item**Aural stimulus**

Listen to the conversation and circle the correct answer.

What did Natalie do yesterday?

Doctor: *Okay. What have you been doing for Natalie?*

Mother: *Well, we kept her home from school yesterday and made sure she got plenty of rest.*

Doctor: *Anything else?*

Mother: *We gave her a lot of juice and water to drink.*

Doctor: *Have you given her any medicine?*

Mother: *No, not yet.*

Test booklet

Circle the correct answer.

What did Natalie do yesterday?



a



b



c



d*

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus is a segment of an extended institutional dialogue between a doctor and a child's mother. The test taker must interpret several phrases in the segment to answer the question. The three distractors play on words and phrases heard in the segment and relate to the content but are incorrect answers to the questions.

Note: Prototype DML1 was modified based on pilot testing results and thus the estimated range and discrimination point are not available.

Item Type DML2

Item format

Multiple choice

Test level

Appropriate for Level B tests only

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is a long monologue or dialogue or a segment of an extended monologue or dialogue. The text contains information about persons, objects, actions, or situations that can be concretely depicted in drawings or photographs. A long text is heard two times. A segment is heard one time after the extended text is heard in its entirety.

The item stem consists of a factual question about the text.

The aural stimulus contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

A set of four single-phrase or single-sentence options follows each stem. The response options contain language at a lower level than the target level. The test taker must circle the letter of the correct answer. The key is a phrase or sentence answering the question using words other than those found in the text.

The three distractors are grammatically accurate and plausibly relate to the content of the text but are inaccurate in that they are either unsupported or contradicted by information in the text. At least one of the distractors incorporates words or phrases from the text.

Prototype item**Aural stimulus**

Now you will hear another conversation between Dr. Li and Natalie's mother. You will hear the conversation two times. Listen to the conversation and circle the letter of the correct answer.

Doctor: *Everything seems fine, but her throat's a little red. I want to take a throat culture to make sure she doesn't have an infection.*

Mother: *Okay. So, um, how long will it take for the test results to come back?*

Doctor: *We should have the results in two days. You should call us then to see if they're ready.*

Mother: *All right. So, she might have a throat infection. You're going to do a test and I should call you back in two days to see what the results are.*

Doctor: *Uh-huh. And if she does have a throat infection I'll prescribe some antibiotics at that time.*

Mother: *Okay. What should I do in the meantime?*

Doctor: *You can get some children's Tylenol at the pharmacy. Give it to her every four to six hours until her fever has gone down. She should continue to drink a lot of liquids and get plenty of rest.*

Mother: *Okay. How long should I keep her out of school?*

Doctor: *It's best to keep her home for the next few days. In fact, I'd like to see her again before you send her back to school.*

Mother: *Okay. So should I schedule a follow-up appointment?*

Doctor: *Yes, you can do that on your way out.*

Mother: *Fine. By the way, is it all right for her to be around her brother?*

Doctor: *Yes, as long as she washes her hands frequently and they don't share utensils or eat off the same plate.*

Mother: *All right. That sounds good. Thank you very much Doctor Li.*

Test booklet

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

What does Dr. Li say about Natalie?

- a. She needs antibiotics.
- *b. She could have an infection.
- c. She needs to see a specialist.
- d. She should go to the hospital.

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus is a long institutional dialogue between a doctor and a child's mother. The test taker must interpret several phrases in the text to find the correct answer. Option A incorporates the word "antibiotics" heard in the text but demonstrates a misunderstanding of the information presented. Options C and D plausibly relate to the context but are unsupported by the text.

Note: Prototype DM-L2 was modified based on pilot testing results and thus the estimated range and discrimination point are not available.

DML Notes

1. Item type DML1 was pilot tested with the select-two-correct format. Pilot testing results indicated that drawing two meanings was problematic, particularly for test takers at the lower levels, and the item type was therefore modified to the multiple-choice format. Pretesting of this item type also emphasized the importance of pictures that clearly represent the intended meaning. One way to control for clarity is to have a small number of test takers at the pretesting stage describe aurally what they see in the pictures. Where there are discrepancies, modifications should be made.
2. Additional item types that assess test taker ability to draw meaning from a listening text need to be developed. Listening texts that lend themselves to assessing this skill need to be selected and item types developed following the prototyping process described in Rahn et al. (1995). Item types that use a constructed-response format should be explored.

Extract Global Information (EG)

General description

The test taker will listen to an extended monologue or dialogue and answer a general question requiring the interpretation of ideas presented in several utterances throughout the text.

Text type

Extended monologue or dialogue

Target level

Intermediate low through advanced low

Test level

Level A: essential

Level B: essential

Item types

In item type EG1, the test taker numbers a series of topics in the order they are discussed. In item type EG2, the test taker selects two of five responses to a factual question about a text.

*Item Type EG1**Item format**Sequencing**Test level*

Appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is an extended monologue or dialogue containing three distinct topics. The test taker listens to the text once in its entirety to answer the question.

On Level A tests, and optionally on Level B tests, there is a visual stimulus that orients the test taker to the content of the text.

The item stem consists of the following instruction:

Number the topics (1, 2, 3) in the order they are discussed.

A set of three words or phrases follows the instruction. Each word or phrase describes one of the topics discussed in the text and, where possible, uses words other than those found in the aural stimulus. The topics are presented in random order.

The aural stimulus contains target-level language. The words or phrases in the item are at a lower level.

Response attributes

Each word or phrase is preceded by a blank, in which the test taker must write a number corresponding to the ordering of topics in the text.

Prototype item

Aural stimulus

You will hear a conversation that takes place in a doctor's office. The doctor will discuss three general topics with Natalie's mother. Read the topics now. (Pause five seconds.) Now, listen to the conversation and number the topics in the order they are discussed.

Doctor: Good morning, I'm Dr. Li.

Mother: Hi Dr. Li, I'm Mrs. Johnson.

Doctor: So, what brings you here today?

Mother: Well, my daughter hasn't been feeling well and I'm a little concerned.

Doctor: Okay. Well, what's your daughter's name?

Mother: Natalie.

Doctor: And how old is she?

Mother: She's five years old.

Doctor: Okay. And what are her symptoms?

Mother: She has a sore throat and a fever.

Doctor: How long has she been sick?

Mother: Well, let's see. Her sore throat started a few days ago and last night when I took her temperature she had a slight fever.

Doctor: All right. Has she been eating normally?

Mother: More or less, but it's been a little hard for her to eat. Her throat is really sore and it hurts when she swallows.

Doctor: How has she been sleeping?

Mother: A little tired. She's been sleeping more than she usually does.

Doctor: Okay. What have you been doing for Natalie?

Mother: Well, we kept her home from school yesterday and made sure she got plenty of rest.

Doctor: Anything else?

Mother: We gave her a lot of juice and water to drink.

Doctor: Have you given her any medicine?

Mother: No, not yet.

Doctor: Okay. Are any of Natalie's friends at school sick?

Mother: Not that I know of.

Doctor: Is anyone else in the family sick?

Mother: Well, my son has been sick last week, but he's just got over it now.

Doctor: I see. Is the family planning a visit?

Mother: Yes.

Doctor: Okay. Is the doctor in any medication?

Mother: Not that I know of.

Doctor: Has she had any surgery in the past?

Mother: No.

Doctor: Okay. Any medical problems in your family that I should be aware of?

Mother: No.

Doctor: Okay. I'm going to examine Natalie now.

Test booklet

Number the topics (1, 2, 3) in the order they are discussed.

- _____ Natalie's symptoms
- _____ Natalie's medical history
- _____ What Natalie's parents have done

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus is an extended institutional dialogue between a doctor and a child's mother in which three general topics are discussed. The test taker must listen to the entire dialogue and order the topics in the order they are discussed.

Estimated range: IH-AH

Discrimination point: AL/AH

*Item Type EG2**Item format*

Select two correct

Test level

Appropriate for both Level A and Level B tests

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is an extended monologue or dialogue describing a single person, phenomenon, or event. The test taker listens to the text once in its entirety to answer the question.

On Level A tests, and optionally on Level B tests, there is a visual stimulus that orients the test taker to the content of the text.

The item stem consists of a general question asking for important ideas repeated or referred to in several places in the text.

The aural stimulus contains target-level language. The words or phrases in the item are at a lower level.

Response attributes

A set of five single-word or single-phrase options follows each stem. The response options use words or phrases different from those found in the aural stimulus, where possible, and contain language at a lower level than the target level. The test taker must select the two correct answers. The keys are words or phrases answering the question using words similar to those in the aural stimulus.

The three distractors are grammatically accurate and incorporate words or phrases from the text. The distractors plausibly relate to the content of the text but are inaccurate in that they are either unsupported or contradicted by information in the text.

Prototype item**Aural stimulus**

You will hear a news report about Philip Vera Cruz. Look at the question. (Pause five seconds.) Now, listen to the news report and check the two correct answers.

Philip Vera Cruz passed away in Bakersfield, California yesterday. He was 89 years old. Vera Cruz was a migrant worker who became a political activist and labor organizer in California. He is best remembered as an organizer of Filipino workers and co-founder of the United Farm Workers Union.

Vera Cruz immigrated from the Philippines when he was 22 years old, hoping to get a good job and an education. However, like many other Filipino immigrants who came to the United States in the 1920s, he was only able to find low-paying jobs in factories, canneries, and fields. Because these jobs were short-term, Vera Cruz had to move frequently in order to find work: cutting boxes in a factory in Washington, canning fish in Alaska, and picking grapes in California.

Vera Cruz was paid very little, yet he sent most of the money he earned to his family in the Philippines. He never married, fearing that if he had his own family to take care of in the States, he would not be able to help his family in the Philippines.

Vera Cruz attended college briefly, but his limited income and commitment to supporting his family made it impossible for him to realize his dream of becoming a lawyer. He did, however, succeed in making education possible for his family: he helped his sister, his brother, and all his brother's children go to college.

Vera Cruz was angered by the low wages, long hours, and poor living standards of migrant workers, and in the mid-1960s helped organize the Filipino workers to fight for improved working conditions. In 1965 he joined forces with Cesar Chavez to establish the United Farm Workers Union, where he served as vice president until 1977. Because of his deep concern for workers and anger at the way they were treated, Vera Cruz dedicated his life to fighting for social justice and equality. He will be remembered as a great leader and activist.

Test booklet

Check (✓) the **two** (2) correct answers.

Which two words or phrases best describe Philip Vera Cruz?

- ☐ lawyer
- ☐ educator
- ☐ farm owner
- ☐ migrant worker*
- ☐ union organizer*

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus, an extended monologue, is a news report about a famous person. The test taker must listen to the entire monologue to find the two words or phrases that best describe the person referred to in the text. The three distractors incorporate words or phrases heard in the text but are contradicted by information presented in the text.

Estimated range: IH-AH

Discrimination point: AL/AH

EG Notes

1. Item type EG1 and item type EG2 were found to be promising not only because they discriminated well but also because they helped orient the test taker to the listening text. However, different listening texts may lend themselves to additional item types other than those specified here. It is recommended that these item types be developed for both Level A and Level B tests.

Make Inferences (MIL)***General description***

The test taker will draw conclusions about ideas implied but not explicitly stated in a listening text.

Text type

Medium or long monologue or dialogue

Target level

Intermediate high through advanced high

Test level

Level A: optional

Level B: essential

Item types

In item type MIL1, the test taker selects one of the four responses to a question about a text.

Item Type MIL1**Item format**

Multiple choice

Test level

Appropriate for Level B tests only

Stimulus attributes

The aural stimulus is a medium, long, or extended monologue or dialogue or any combination of the three. The text should contain at least one idea that is not explicitly stated and several contextual clues that allow the listener to draw only one conclusion about the unstated information. A long text is heard two times. A segment is heard one time after the extended text is heard in its entirety.

The item stem consists of a question asking for information implied but not explicitly stated in the text.

The aural stimulus contains target-level language. The item stem contains language at a lower level.

Response attributes

A set of four single-phrase or single-sentence options follows each stem. The response options contain language at a lower level than the target level. The test taker must circle the letter of the correct answer. The key is a phrase or sentence answering the question using words other than those found in the text.

The three distractors are grammatically accurate and plausibly relate to the content of the text but are inaccurate in that they are either unsupported or contradicted by information in the text. At least one of the distractors incorporates words or phrases from the text.

Prototype item**Aural stimulus**

Now you will hear another conversation between Dr. Li and Natalie's mother. You will hear the conversation two times. Listen to the conversation and circle the letter of the correct answer.

Doctor: *Everything seems fine, but her throat's a little red. I want to take a throat culture to make sure she doesn't have an infection.*

Mother: *Okay. So, um, how long will it take for the test results to come back?*

Doctor: *We should have the results in two days. You should call us then to see if they're ready.*

Mother: *All right. So, she might have a throat infection. You're going to do a test and I should call you back in two days to see what the results are.*

Doctor: *Uh-huh. And if she does have a throat infection I'll prescribe some antibiotics at that time.*

Mother: *Okay. What should I do in the meantime?*

Doctor: *You can get some children's Tylenol at the pharmacy. Give it to her every four to six hours until her fever has gone down. She should continue to drink a lot of liquids and get plenty of rest.*

Mother: *Okay. How long should I keep her out of school?*

Doctor: *It's best to keep her home for the next few days. In fact, I'd like to see her again before you send her back to school.*

Mother: *Okay. So should I schedule a follow-up appointment?*

Doctor: *Yes, you can do that on your way out.*

Mother: *Fine. By the way, is it all right for her to be around her brother?*

Doctor: *Yes, as long as she washes her hands frequently and they don't share utensils or eat off the same plate.*

Mother: *All right. That sounds good. Thank you very much Doctor Li.*

Test booklet

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

When does this conversation take place?

- a. one week later
- b. a few days later
- *c. after the examination
- d. after Dr. Li sees the test results

Prototype item notes

The aural stimulus is a long institutional dialogue between a doctor and a child's mother that follows an extended dialogue between the same speakers (see p. 148). The test taker must infer from contextual clues in both texts when the conversation takes place. The three distractors incorporate words and phrases heard in the text and represent plausible responses to the question but are contradicted by information presented in the text.

Estimated range: AL-AH

Discrimination point: AH+

MIL Notes

1. Additional item types that assess test taker ability to make inferences need to be developed. Listening texts that lend themselves to assessing this skill need to be selected and item types developed following the prototyping process described in Kahn et al. (1995).

Glossary of Selected Terms

The terms in this glossary are defined to reflect how they are used in this test development plan and cannot necessarily be generalized beyond this context.

constructed response

An item format requiring the test taker to produce rather than select a response

discrimination point

The point at which an item best differentiates performance between two adjacent proficiency levels

distractor

An incorrect response option

essential skills

Skills identified by working group members as critical for placement and mandatory on every form of the test

estimated range

The range of proficiency levels at which an item seems most appropriate based on content considerations and statistical performance

factual function

One of three categories of functions referred to in the Model Standards involving eliciting or providing information about facts. Examples of factual tasks include identify, tell, describe, explain, and analyze.

fill in the blank

An item format that requires the test taker to provide pieces of missing information consisting of a single number, word, or phrase in the spaces provided

function

The communicative purpose of a task. Three basic categories of functions referred to in the Model Standards are: factual, social, and suasive. (See definitions of specific functions in this glossary.)

Glossary of selected terms

institutional

Institutional refers to situations in which individuals interact in clearly defined, routine, and formal registers. Examples include the relationship between a customer and a server, and a teacher and a student.

item stem

A question or statement that a test taker responds to.

key

The correct response(s).

Level A test

An instrument with content appropriate for Model Standards proficiency levels beginning low through intermediate high.

Level B test

An instrument with content appropriate for Model Standards proficiency levels intermediate low through advanced high.

matching

An item format that requires the test taker to identify associated elements (picture, word, phrase, or sentence) from two parallel groups.

multiple choice

An item format that requires the test taker to select a single correct option from several choices.

optional skills

Skills identified by working group members as important but not critical for placement and which need not be on every form of the test.

passes

The number of times the test taker hears a listening test.

pilot testing

Administration of items or who to a large number of students across an appropriate range of levels.

selected response
An item format that requires the test taker to choose the correct answer(s) from a series of response options

secondary text
A supplementary text related to the primary text and critical to some reading and writing task types. A secondary text is either an additional display or paragraph or a statement in the item stem which sets up a condition or problem.

series of sentences
A series of sentences that specify the elements of a writing task

model item or text
A model item or text that serves as an example for item writers

response attributes

Characteristics of the response for a given item including descriptions of correct and incorrect response options (selected response) and guidelines for judging the acceptability of the test taker's response (constructed response)

secondary text

A supplementary text related to the primary text and critical to some reading and writing task types. A secondary text is either an additional display or paragraph or a statement in the item stem which sets up a condition or problem.

select [number] correct

An item format that requires the test taker to select more than one correct answer from several response options. The number of correct answers is always specified.

selected response

An item format requiring the test taker to choose the correct answer(s) from a series of response options

series of sentences

A series of sentences that specify the elements of a writing task

Glossary of selected terms

contextualization

One of three categories of functions referred to in the Model Standards involving eliciting or providing information in such a way that a persuasive purpose is fulfilled. Examples of contextualization include request, suggest, advise, and recommend.

descriptive function

Characteristics of the input to the test taker for a given item including descriptions of the test(s), item stem, and stimulus where appropriate.

persuasive function

One of three categories of functions referred to in the Model Standards involving eliciting or providing information in such a way that a persuasive purpose is fulfilled. Examples of persuasive tasks include request, suggest, advise, and recommend.

target-level language

Language presumed to be familiar to test takers at a given proficiency level, but unfamiliar to test takers at the next lower proficiency level.

turn

The uninterrupted speech of a single person.

unique answer

An item format that requires the test taker to generate a short response consisting of a single number, word, or phrase to a question that has only one correct answer.

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Appendix A

**Adult ESL Assessment Working Group
Members**

1992-1995

Adult ESL Assessment Working Group

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Member</u>
ABC Adult School, Cerritos	Jean Rose
California Department of Education Adult Education Policy and Planning Unit ESL Special Projects	K. Lynn Savage ^c
Career Resources Development Center, San Francisco	Chris Shaw Mark Larroca ^b Rachel Khattab ^a
City College of San Francisco	Nadia Scholnick
Fremont School for Adults, Sacramento	Mary White
Hayward Adult School	Joyce Clapp
Los Angeles Unified School District Division of Adult and Career Education	Barbara Martinez Greta Kojima ^a
Merced Adult School	Debbie Glass
Mt. Diablo Adult Education	Jacques LaCour
Oxnard Adult School	Judy Hanlon
San Diego Community College District Continuing Education Centers	Gretchen Bitterlin ^d Leann Howard ^d
Santa Clara Unified School District Educational Options	Bet Messmer
Torrance Adult School	Bertie Wood
Watsonville Adult School	Claudia Grossi

^aServed as representative during Year 1

^bServed as representative during Year 2

^cServed as a representative during Years 1 and 2

^dFor this agency two representatives shared responsibility.

Appendix B

Criteria for Estimating the Range and Discrimination Point of Prototype Reading and Listening Items

Criteria for Estimating the Range and Discrimination Point of Prototype Reading and Listening Items

The appropriateness of items at different proficiency levels is based both on content considerations and on item performance at those levels. Two indicators of item appropriateness are given for each prototype item: the Estimated Range (the range of levels at which the item provides appropriate discrimination) and the Discrimination Point (the two adjacent levels between which the item best discriminates). These indicators were derived through a comparison of the item content (including the skill being tested and the level of language in the item and the primary text) with the Model Standards, and through the application of operational criteria from pilot testing, described below.

In the majority of cases, the empirical performance of the items was consistent with the judgments based on item content. In a few cases, however, discrimination between two levels failed to meet the operational criteria where item content predicted that the item would discriminate between those levels. In these cases, content considerations overrode the empirical data, primarily because the Model Standards levels of students at agencies where pilot testing took place had not been precisely determined and thus it could not be said with certainty that the item would not discriminate between those levels.

The operational criteria for determining the Estimated Range and Discrimination Point of items are as follows:

Estimated Range

If the p value of the item at all levels tested (BL-IH on Level A or IL-AH on Level B) exceeds .75, the item is considered too easy for the population.

If the p value of the item at all levels tested (BL-IH on Level A or IL-AH on Level B) is less than .35, the item is considered too difficult for the population.

An item is defined as discriminating between two adjacent levels if the p value at the higher level is at least .10 greater than the p value at the lower level, unless (a) the p value at both the higher and lower level is less than .35 or (b) the p value at both the higher and lower level is greater than .75.

If an item administered to four adjacent levels (e.g., BL-IH) discriminates between the two lowest levels (e.g., BL-BH) and the two highest levels (e.g., IL-IH), it is defined as discriminating between the two middle levels (e.g., BH-IL) regardless of the magnitude of the difference in p values between those two levels.

Discrimination Point

The discrimination point indicates the two adjacent levels between which an item best discriminates. It is operationally defined as the point at which the p value at the lower level is less than .5 and the p value at the higher level is greater than .5, as long as the difference between these two p values is greater than .10. If not, the discrimination point of the item is the next higher or lower point, whichever has the greater difference between the two p values. If no point has a difference in p values greater than .10, the item is considered to have poor discrimination and should not be used.

Figure 7 below summarizes the discrimination points for Level A and Level B referred to in this document.

Figure 7
Definitions of Discrimination Points

Test Level	Discrimination Point	Levels between which an item best discriminates
A	BL-	Beginning low and below (beginning literacy)
	BL/BH	Beginning low and beginning high
	BH/IL	Beginning high and intermediate low
	IL/IH	Intermediate low and intermediate high
	IH+	Intermediate high and above
B	IL-	Intermediate low and below
	IL/IH	Intermediate low and intermediate high
	IH/AL	Intermediate high and advanced low
	AL/AH	Advanced low and advanced high
	AH+	Advanced high and above

Appendix C

Examples of Reading/Writing Text Adaptation

Reading/Writing Text Adaptation

This appendix illustrates the guidelines for text adaptation presented in the Reading/Writing Text Specifications above by providing examples of texts in their original and adapted forms. Although all texts underwent minor modifications such as changes in proper names, telephone numbers, and addresses, the texts presented here underwent extensive revision. Adaptations made on the three texts presented below (a bicycle shop advertisement, an apartment guide, and a newspaper article) are representative of the kinds of changes necessary for a text to be appropriate for placement testing. The original and adapted versions of each text are accompanied by explanatory notes highlighting the revisions made.

Bicycle Shop Advertisement

Original text

"ONE OF
LA'S TOP 5
BIKE SHOPS"
-L.A. WEEKLY

Beverly Hills
BIKE SHOP

WORLD CLASS BICYCLES
CALL: 275•BIKE
275-2483
★ OPEN 7 DAYS ★

804 S. ROBERTSON BLVD. • BEVERLY HILLS (170 S.W. OF OLYMPIC BLVD.)
OFFICIAL LICENSING CENTER FOR CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

WE SHIP
WORLDWIDE

• HONDA • ~~PARASOL~~ • ~~SHIMANO~~ • ~~SHIMANO~~ • ~~SHIMANO~~
 • CANNON • ~~DAVIDSON~~ • ~~DAVIDSON~~ • ~~DAVIDSON~~ • ~~DAVIDSON~~
 • COWELL • MEDICAL • KESTREL

• HONDA • ~~PARASOL~~ • ~~SHIMANO~~ • ~~SHIMANO~~ • ~~SHIMANO~~
 • CANNON • ~~DAVIDSON~~ • ~~DAVIDSON~~ • ~~DAVIDSON~~ • ~~DAVIDSON~~
 • COWELL • MEDICAL • KESTREL

• HONDA • ~~PARASOL~~ • ~~SHIMANO~~ • ~~SHIMANO~~ • ~~SHIMANO~~
 • CANNON • ~~DAVIDSON~~ • ~~DAVIDSON~~ • ~~DAVIDSON~~ • ~~DAVIDSON~~
 • COWELL • MEDICAL • KESTREL

• BICYCLES FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY
 RACING • ALL TERRAIN • TOURING
 FREE STYLE • EXERCISE EQUIPMENT
 • FREE LIFETIME SERVICE PLAN
 WITH PURCHASE OF ANY BIKE
 • PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CENTER
 ALL MAKES & MODELS EXPERTLY SERVICED
 • QUALITY SELECTION OF ACCESSORIES & APPAREL
 • WIDE SELECTION OF CAR CARRIERS
 • WE SHIP WORLDWIDE

Donnelly Yellow Pages, Los Angeles, 1992

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Adapted text

Village Bike Shop
World Class Bicycles
Call: 257-2453

**WE SHIP
WORLDWIDE**

854 Ocean Blvd • Palm Village

- Bicycles for the entire family
- Free lifetime service plan with purchase of any bike
- All makes & models expertly serviced
- Quality selection of accessories & apparel
- Bicycle & exerciser rentals available

Free Parking Available
★ OPEN 7 DAYS ★






adapted from Donnelly Yellow Pages, Los Angeles, 1992

Adaptation notes

The bicycle shop advertisement was simplified to focus on distinguishing features and to make the presentation less cluttered. Some features such as specific bicycle types and brand names were deleted.

The layout was edited for visual clarity. Critical information was listed in one area or made more prominent, redundant information was deleted, and visuals were made simpler and smaller.

Apartment Guide

Original text

PROPERTY REVIEW GUIDE™

C=Call for details S=Single City Name	Phone	Page #	MAP LOCATION	Special	BEDROOMS	BATHS	CONTROL ACCESS	COIN-OP PARKING	LAUNDRY ROOMS	WASH/DRY ROOMS	POOLS	SPA	FITNESS CENTER	TENNIS	CLUBHOUSE	PETS	UNIQUE FEATURE
COASTAL CITIES																	
SANTA MONICA																	
Pacific Ocean Apts.	310 399-8583	17	L5	Call manager	S,1	1	♦ ♦ ♦		♦ ♦						C		Close to beach
Pico Lani	310 828-8388	16	O9	Low rents	1	1	♦		♦								Great value!
MARINA DEL REY																	
Admiralty	310 821-4282	21	W12	2 months Free	1,2	1,2	♦ ♦ 2		1								Lap Pool
Bar Harbor	310 823-4688	18	W12	1 month Free	S,1,2	1,2	♦	16	1	1	♦				C		Best Site
Casa de Marina	310 822-8700	22	W12	Move-in Special	1,2	1	♦ ♦ 4		2	2	♦				C		Near Site Paths
Desunite Marina	310 823-4655	19	W12	11/2 month Free	1,2,3	1,2	♦ ♦ 4		1	1					C		Best Site
Islander	310 328-3747	21	W12	1 Month Free	1,2	1,2	♦ ♦ 4		1	1	♦				♦		Best Site
Marina City Club	310 306-9191	23	W12		1,2,3	2	♦ ♦ ♦ ♦		♦ ♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦ ♦					C		Penthouses
Marina Harbor	310 823-8974	3	W12	1 month Free	1,2,3	1,2		16	5	3	♦						Best Site
Marina Pointe	310 822-5607	85	W12	Call to arrange visit	1,2	1,2	♦ ♦ ♦		♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦					♦ C		Grand opening
Marina Towers	310 822-9091	20	W12	Move-in bonus	S,1	1	♦ ♦ 2										Ocean View

The Southern California Apartment Magazine, April 20-May 3, 1994

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Adapted text

Apartment Guide

Apt. Features	Willow Court	Village Place	Hamill Towers	Pierce Plaza
rent	\$750	\$550	\$700	\$950
bdrms.	2	1	2	2
baths	2	1	1	2
parking		♦	♦	♦
security bldg.	♦		♦	♦
pool	♦	♦		
laundry	♦		♦	♦
pets ok		♦	♦	
unique feature(s)	• on bus line	• all new appliances	• all utilities paid	• A/C • cable ready

adapted from *The Southern California Apartment Magazine*, April 20-May 3, 1994

Adaptation notes

The apartment guide was simplified to focus on a restricted number of distinguishing features and rental prices, an essential feature not present in the original version, were added. Unique features listed in the original version were replaced with features considered more appropriate for the target population. Other modifications included the addition of abbreviations (e.g., "bdrms.") and the substitution of jargon with more common terminology (e.g., "security bldg." for "control access").

The layout was modified for visual clarity. Only one code was used to indicate presence or absence of a given feature, fewer apartments were presented, and features were listed horizontally rather than diagonally.

Newspaper Article

Original text

Graduation No Minor Task For Adult Student

By April Hawarden

After spending six years studying at the Culver City Adult School, Minor Rodriguez' primary motivation for graduating was his 18-year-old stepdaughter, who becomes a high school senior this fall.

"[I] wanted to have my diploma first," Rodriguez explained.

Rodriguez, who attended classes at the adult school to learn English and become a U.S. citizen, did not expect to accomplish two feats in one year: getting his diploma from the adult school and being named Citizen of the Year by California State Consortium for Adult Education.

The consortium, comprised of California adult schools, attempts to raise awareness of adult school programs and course offerings.

Described as modest by one teacher, Rodriguez did not expect the recognition.

"I feel proud," the 33-year-old student said.

But Rodriguez has many reasons for graduating. "[I] wanted to do this as an example for my kids," citing the fact that he came from another country, Guatemala, and did not know the language, but still received an education.

Rodriguez also has two daughters ages 12, 9 and a 5-year-old son.

"It's up to them," he said. "I have a lot of confidence they will be better."

When Rodriguez first came to the United States 15 years ago, he felt no immediate need to learn English since the people he hung around spoke primarily Spanish and he listened to Spanish radio and TV stations.

Raised in single parent home by his mother because his father died when he was young, Rodriguez said his family "taught me to be responsible, to be straight."

Since he wanted something better out of life, Rodriguez went back to school in 1988 to learn English and become a citizen.

He said one word describes his decision to go to school, raise a family and hold two jobs—sacrifice.

But with all he has done, Rodriguez said he feels good about his accomplishments. "I can share it with my kids."

In order to support his family, Rodriguez works as a storeroom worker at Kaiser Permanente Medical Care Program in West Los Angeles during the week and as a nurses' aide at Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena on the weekends.

Many teachers helped Rodriguez throughout the years, but the most influential teacher was Harriet Degelsmith.

"She always makes me feel good about myself" and she was "always finding ways to make it easier," Rodriguez said.

In response to this remark, Degelsmith said "I guess that's my personality, but I'm also paid to do that."

Degelsmith described Rodriguez as "very diligent and very focused," which is necessary when a person has a family, two jobs and participates in community activities.

In regard to his award, Degelsmith said, "We are very proud . . . we are proud to think we had a part in that."

She said the adult school is full of students like Rodriguez, who have

many responsibilities, but Rodriguez stands out because he gets the job done with a smile and in a timely fashion.

She said he is "one of those people you would feel privileged to know" and added that Rodriguez would be embarrassed by her remarks because he is very modest.

He's so modest in fact that Rodriguez did not mention receiving an employee of the year award from Kaiser.

Rodriguez said he was named employee of the second quarter and Most Outstanding Employee for 1990 in Kaiser's material management department.

His supervisor, Lloyd Daron, said he is impressed by Rodriguez' stamina.

"That's commendable he had the fortitude to do that," he said, and added that Rodriguez has also been in charge of the blood drive and worked diligently at getting donors. "He's quite a fella."

Culver City Adult School Counselor Nicki McBreen said there were other students considered in the selection process, but Rodriguez "was sort of at the top" because he had taken more classes than the other candidates and remained dedicated.

"Minor has slowly but surely stuck with the program," McBreen said. "He's really a great guy."

Receiving his diploma is only the first step to other ambitions for Rodriguez. He said he wants to go to college and earn a degree in radiology.

Culver City News, June 23, 1994

Adapted text

City News

Thursday, June 23, 1994



Person of the Week

City News' Person of the Week is adult school student Oscar Rodriguez, whose dream came true last week when he received his high school diploma after six years of study at City Adult School.

Rodriguez said his primary motivation for graduating was his 17-year-old daughter, who becomes a high school senior this fall. "I wanted to have my diploma first," the 35-year-old student explained.

Rodriguez, who attended classes at the adult school to

learn English and become a U.S. citizen, accomplished two feats in one year: getting his high school diploma and being named Citizen of the Year by the State Consortium for Adult Education.

Rodriguez came to the United States 14 years ago from Guatemala. At that time, he felt no immediate need to learn English since the people he spent time with spoke primarily Spanish and he listened to Spanish radio and TV.

Later, he realized he needed to learn English in order to get his high school diploma. So, in 1988 he enrolled in City Adult School where he proved to be a very diligent and focused student. He found time to study and participate in community activities while working two jobs and raising a family.

According to Consortium president Gerry Delaney, "The adult school is full of students like Rodriguez who have many responsibilities, but Rodriguez

stands out because he always gets the job done with a smile and in a timely fashion." The Consortium acknowledged Rodriguez' accomplishments by giving him the Citizen of the Year award.

"I feel proud. I wanted to do this as an example for my kids," said Rodriguez, who has another daughter, age 7, and two sons, 15 and 10.

In fact, Rodriguez has set a good example not only at school but at work. Last year he was named Most Outstanding Employee at County Hospital where he works as a nurses' aide.

Receiving his diploma is only the first step to other ambitions for Rodriguez, who plans to continue his work in the medical field. "Now I want to go to college so I can become a nurse."

City News congratulates Oscar Rodriguez and wishes him continued success.

adapted from Culver City News, June 23, 1994

Adaptation notes

The newspaper article was edited to develop specific ideas presented in the original text and to clearly delineate the reasons Rodriguez was chosen as person of the week. Such revisions were necessary in order to assess the ability of the test taker to interpret relationships between ideas. Although the newspaper article underwent extensive revision, the journalistic register was retained and vocabulary and structures of the same complexity found in the original were used.

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Appendix D

Sample Responses for Generate Writing Tasks

Sample Responses for Generate Writing Tasks

This appendix contains sample responses for Generate writing tasks. There is one writing sample per level for each prototype task. The sample responses are accompanied by notes explaining the application of the scoring rubric to the sample with regard to task fulfillment and language use. Also included in this appendix are examples from test takers who should be retested with a higher or lower level writing task.

Prototype Task GN1

Beginning low (1)

Just a note ...

Your Friend carmel His concerts

None of the task requirements are fulfilled; unrelated words and phrases form less than a single sentence

Prototype Task GN1

Beginning high (2)

Just a note ...

My friend Suu asked me to go
to the concert on July 16th but
I can go at evening I have some
problem

Some task requirements are fulfilled; one or possibly two simple sentences with frequent errors

Prototype Task GN1

Intermediate low (3)

Just a note . . .
Dear my friend I can't go
with you to the evening Concerts
because I have appointment
please we can go on 23rd
thank you
Yours.
friendly ~~me~~

All task requirements are fulfilled; simple sentences form a short paragraph; errors are frequent

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Prototype Task GN1

Intermediate high (4)

Just a note ...

My friend, I saw your note
last night, when I came from
my work I see you want go to
the concert on July 16th with me,
I'm so sorry but in the day
I will be visit my brother in his
house, but I want go to the
concert too, what do you thing
about July 23rd? please let me
know if you want go with me
Thanks

All task requirements are fulfilled; related sentences form a sequential paragraph; some complex structures attempted; errors in simple structures

Prototype Task GN2: Level A

Beginning low (1)

Dear Chris,

You won't believe what happened to me the other day!

My name J.C.H. going Mini-Max +
the day

None of the task requirements are fulfilled; unrelated words and phrases form less than a single sentence

Prototype Task GN2: Level A

Intermediate low (3)

Dear Chris,
You won't believe what happened to me the other day!
One man came into the Mini-Mart
when I work and I had to bought
some bears.
When the man show me the
license, I can't believe, the license
was mine, the man stole in my
truck two months ago. And I
had to called to the police and
the man ran away.

Some of the task requirements are fulfilled; sentences form a short paragraph; errors are frequent

Prototype Task GN2: Level A

Intermediate high (4)

Dear Chris,
You won't believe what happened to me the other day!
When I worked at Wally's Mini-Mart,
someone tried to buy beer. I asked him
to show me his driver's license. This
driver's license wasn't real. Do you know
why I could know it wasn't real?
This driver's license was mine!! so.
when I called the police, the guy heard
I talking to the police and ran away.
Fortunately the guy was arrested by
police. Be careful your wallet.
next person may be you!!

All task requirements are fulfilled; related sentences form a sequential paragraph; complex structures attempted; some errors in simple structures

Prototype Task GN2: Level A

Retest Level B (5)

Dear Chris,
You won't believe what happened to me the other day!
I came to work at Wally's early, because I wanted to clean something. While I was cleaning the table, the teenagers came in and asked me to buy some beer. When he showed ^{me} his driver's license I was shocked — it was my driver's license that stolen in two months earlier. Although I felt sorry for him, I had called the police.
When I was talking to the police, he heard and ran away but he left his wallet, which contained his real driver's license. The police found ^{him} and arrested him quickly.
I stop here.
your friend
Douglas
PS = don't forget to answer me

All task requirements are fulfilled; complex sentences usually attempted; some errors in complex structures

Note: The test taker fulfills all task requirements and demonstrates a command of the language that seems to exceed capabilities representative of intermediate high. Therefore, retesting at the higher level is recommended.

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Prototype Task GN2: Level B

Intermediate low (3)

Dear Chris,

You won't believe what happened to me the other day!

Someone stole my driver license from my truck. Two months earlier this man tried to buy beer in the place I work. He got in and he showed me the driver license and I read my name in the license. Now I have driver license.

Some requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are loosely integrated and are not developed; simple sentences with frequent errors

Prototype Task GN2: Level B

Intermediate high (4)

Dear Chris,
You won't believe what happened to me the other day!
I can't believe about it, either.
This is a funny story. Please give me a few time to tell its story for you. I was stolen my driver's license before by someone. One day a boy came to buy beer at my store by using a stolen driver's licence.
Can you imagine how much I was surprised when I saw my driver's licence? The boy didn't notice about it. So I called immediately the police. The boy fled when he heard me talking to the police.
He ran away from my store.
I can't believe to return my driver's licence like this.
sincerely yours.
Douglas Cleaver

Most requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are somewhat integrated and developed; mostly simple sentences with some complex structures, advanced vocabulary, and complex verb tenses

Prototype Task GN2: Level B

Advanced low (5)

Dear Chris,
You won't believe what happened to me the other day! Do
you remember that my truck was broken in
and my driver's license was stolen two months
ago? I got it back already because there was
a man whose name is James Haskell trying
to buy beer from me. I asked him for
his driver's license but he showed me mine.
What a strange it is?
Suddenly, I know that he was the
guy who broke in my truck and took my
driver's license so that I called the police
but he ran away. Anyway, the police
arrested him finally.
I wish he will get what he deserves for
such a bad thing he had done.
I'll write you again to tell you
about this guy after the sentence of the
court.
Mising you
D.C.

All requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are effectively integrated and developed; a variety of simple and complex sentences used with some errors in usage

Prototype Task GN2: Level B

Advanced high (6)

Dear Chris,

You won't believe what happened to me the other day! As you know, last January my wallet with my driver's license was stolen. I have almost forgotten about that event. But imagine how I was surprised when I saw my driver's license again! One teenager wanted to buy beer in the Mini-Mart where I work. He showed me his driver's license, and I saw my own name in it. I called the police at once, but that little thief fled when he heard me talking to the police. I think he was very frightened because he even forgot to take his own wallet in a hurry. There was his driver's license in that wallet. Of course, he was arrested very soon.

If somebody had told me before that such event could happen with me, I wouldn't have believed because I don't believe in coincidences, but it did happen. I wanted to write you about it. What do you think about it? I'll wait for your letter.

Douglas.

All requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are effectively integrated and developed; a variety of simple and complex sentences used with few errors

Prototype Task GN3

Intermediate low (3)

Dear City News Editor:

I would like to recommend MIKHAIL ~~Stametsky~~ as the
next Person of the Week. He is a nice man.

He is very interesting man. Mikhail can
make many thinks. He almost helps

peoples. Mikhail was born in Kiev, Ukraine.

He graduates school, college, and university.

He has several occupations. In 1994

Mikhail arrived in USA in 1994

Few task requirements are fulfilled; ideas are not integrated or
developed; only simple sentences with errors

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Prototype Task GN3

Intermediate high (4)

Dear City News Editor:

I would like to recommend as the
next Person of the Week. Adult school student, Jose
[redacted], He comes from Mexico 11 years ago,
when he came for the first time. He brought
his wife and his 5 children, (3 boys and 2 girls).
He stated working at the strawberry
field for full time.

Before 4 years ago he moved, from
the city, that only him and his family
speak Spanish. He was tired of trying to
say something to his neighbors, but he couldn't
say nothing. And some times his children asked
him something about homework, but it was
impossible to help his own children, because
he couldn't speak English. So one day he
decide to go to school. He study hard and
he makes his English diploma in 2 years.
He got a better job and knows he can
help his children and speak with everybody.
He is the manager from the electronic and
he says that he wants to go to college so he
can be more.

Some requirements of the task are fulfilled; some ideas are integrated and developed while other ideas are not; predominantly simple sentences and some complex sentences with errors

Note: Although this sample falls between minimal and partial task fulfillment, the language is best characterized by the third band of descriptors. Therefore, this sample is most representative of intermediate high writing.

Prototype Task GN3

Advanced low (5)

Dear City News Editor:

I would like to recommend my father, ~~Tokyo~~ as the next Person of the Week. I didn't notice how hard his life has been, but the more I grow up, the more I feel his endurance. Now he became a president of one company. When he was small, World War II occurred and this made his life hard. For a while he was in South Korea, walking 40 kilometer everyday to flee from the danger, but he survived from the War, and came back to Japan. He was working very hard but because he hadn't had good education, he began to study at night time after his work to promote in his company. After he got married to my mom, he got three kids including me in 7 years to support for our living. He was doing well promoting in his company although he has been a diabetic causing many illness. He got incredibly high blood pressure, heart attack, liver sickness and farth. Even though he almost died having so much pain, he didn't give up without saying anything and recovered. He still has a lot of problems in his body, but he is still work hard as he can. Because of this his toughness, he became a president and he is still trying to get something to be proud in his life.

Most requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are usually integrated and developed; complex sentences usually attempted and advanced vocabulary used; some errors in form and usage

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Prototype Task GN3

Advanced high (6)

Dear City News Editor:

I would like to recommend Mr. Robert ~~the~~ as the
next Person of the Week.

Robert is a classmate of mine in ^{the} ~~the~~ Evening
Adult school. He came from China three years ago.
Since then, he has ^{worked} two jobs and has four children and
parents to take care of. Busy as he is, he still
sticks to his computer study and attends the class
every day. He learns computer skills so quickly
because he can understand English very well but
things were different when he was immigrated here
at first. All these years, he only sleeps 4 hours a
day for his English study. He says, "How can I work
well in an English-speaking country without knowing
English?" So with great effort, he has improved him-
self step by step. Now he is not only good at
English but also computer skills. And what's more
important, he always encourages the other students to
work hard. No matter what has any problem, Robert will
lend his helping hand. So everyone of us likes him. We
recommend that Mr. Robert ~~the~~ as the next Person of the Week.
He is our bright example.

All requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are effectively integrated and developed; variety of simple and complex sentences used with few errors

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Prototype Task GN4

Retest Level A

Dear City News Editor:

I would like to recommend Jane Joun Kim as the next Person of the Week.

She was born in Korea in 1964.

She arrived in the United States in 1985.

She was work in medical assistant training program in 1986-1988

In 1989 she was work in medical assistant at City Family Clinic.

In 1991 she was work in Korean - American Youth Services volunteer.

and in 1993 she was work in instructor of community first-aid classes.

Few requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are not integrated or developed; although there are more than one or two simple sentences, most words and phrases used are directly copied from the prompt; frequent errors

Note: Although this sample contains several simple sentences, most of the language is copied from the prompt. The test taker did not generate enough language for evaluation, therefore, retesting at the lower level is recommended.

Prototype Task GN4

Intermediate low (3)

Dear City News Editor:

I would like to recommend Jane Jeun Kim as the next Person of the Week.

she was nice person. she want get job. she was.

born in Korea in 1964. she was in 1985.

Arrival in the United States. since 1986 to

1988. she went to medical assistant training

program do job. in 1989 she worked.

medical assistant at City Family clinic.

in 1991. she worked to Korean-American youth

services volunteer. in 1993 she went to

Instructor of community first-aid classes.

This letter recommend for Jane Jeun Kim

please get for a job. Thank your.

Sandy C. Lin

Some requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are loosely integrated and not developed; simple sentences only with frequent errors; some copying from prompt

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Prototype Task GN4

Intermediate high (4)

Dear City News Editor:

I would like to recommend Jane Jean Kim as the next Person of the Week.

She Born in Korea in 1964, she came
to the united states in 1985 one year
later she was studying in Medical assistant
training program she study there 2 years.
After that, she desid to study in Medical
assistant at city family clinic. In 1991 she
were workin in Korean-American Youth services
volunteer she were working there free
becaus she wanted to help the people and
learn about the job she liked, she was
volunteer for two years, then in 1993 she
were a Instructor of community first-aid classes
is an exelent person and she worked hard
to be Instructor of community first-aid
Classes it's why I want, her story
to be in the news because she is one
person how study hard. Please show this
Thank You.

Laura Montiel

Most requirements of the task are fulfilled; some ideas are integrated and developed; predominantly simple sentences with few complex sentences attempted; frequent errors

Prototype Task GN4

Advanced low (5)

Dear City News Editors

I would like to recommend Jane Jean Kim as the next Person of the Week. She had a great achievement in her field from a trainee to an instructor.

Jane Jean Kim was born in Korea in 1964. She came to the United States in 1985. In 1986, she enrolled in Medical assistant training program. Two year later, she got a certificate of medical assistant because of hard-working.

After she graduated from Medical assistant training program, she found a job as a medical assistant at City Family Clinic. ~~In 1991~~ In 1991, she worked as a volunteer at Korean-American Youth Services to help more Koreans since she had been working at City Family Clinic for three years. She was so enthusiastic and successful that she became an instructor of community first-aid classes in 1993. In her life, she ~~try~~ did her best to help ~~to~~ Koreans to be ~~that~~ healthful.

So I recommend her as the next Person of the Week.

Sincerely yours,

Jong. S. Lee

All requirements of the task are fulfilled; most ideas are integrated and developed; simple sentences with complex sentences usually attempted; some advanced vocabulary; some errors

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Prototype Task GN4

Advanced high (6)

Dear City News Editor:

I would like to recommend Jane Jeun Kim as the next Person of the Week.

She was born in Korea in 1964. When Jane was 21, she came to the United States. After one year she decided to become a medical assistant, so she started to attend the medical assistant training program. In two years she successfully completed this program and got a job as a medical assistant at City Family Clinic, where she still works.

One year ago Jane got another job as an instructor of community first-aid classes where everyone is glad to learn from her. In addition, she is a volunteer in Korean-American Youth Services where she helps teenagers from Korea

to overcome many problems of adaptation to the new life in the new country. She really cares about other people and spends much time with them. I think she deserves to be noticed and be named Person of the Week.

Sincerely yours, Julia

All requirements of the task are fulfilled; ideas are effectively integrated and developed; simple and complex sentences with few errors; advanced vocabulary used

Appendix E

Rater Training Procedures for Scoring Generate Writing Tasks

Rater Training Procedures for Scoring Generate Writing Tasks

This appendix contains recommended procedures for training raters to score Generate writing tasks. It is important to emphasize that the materials used in training should be directly related to the task being scored. This should be done to familiarize raters with the context in which a particular task is embedded, to provide training on representative samples, and to prompt discussions of task-related issues. Additionally, procedures for checking rater reliability must be established by the core development team to ensure that raters apply the rubric consistently.

Training Materials

The following materials are needed to train raters to score Generate (GN) tasks:

- **Reading/writing context**

The primary text, the secondary text (where appropriate), the writing prompt, and any reading comprehension questions associated with the primary text

- **Appropriate level scoring rubric**

See discussion of rubrics under Scoring GN Tasks above.

- **Examples of complex sentences and verb forms**

A list of sentences that illustrate complex sentence types (e.g., sentences with relative clauses, adverbials, conditionals) and complex verb forms (e.g., present perfect, past continuous, passive voice)

Sentences should be related to the writing task in that they could plausibly be part of a response. Following are some example sentences from prototype writing task GN2:

Complex sentence types

The man who stole my wallet came into the store.

When he came into the store I called the police.

Although I felt sorry for him, I called the police.

If the boy had realized that I was Douglas Cleaver, he would never have tried to buy beer with my license.

Complex verb forms

I have worked/have been working at Wally's for three years.

I was working behind the counter when the man came in.

My wallet was stolen last March.

He must have stolen the wallet from my truck.

- **Four sets of writing samples**

Representative writing samples selected from responses to be scored

Set 1: Anchor papers

One writing sample per proficiency level presented in ascending order (e.g., BL, BH, IL, IH)

Each sample is clearly representative of the proficiency level.

Set 2: Norming papers

One writing sample per proficiency level presented in random order

Each sample is clearly representative of the proficiency level.

Sets 3 and 4: Norming papers

Four writing samples not necessarily from each proficiency level

Some of the samples illustrate issues or problems that raters may encounter (e.g., copying, integration of ideas, task specific issues).

Note: Additional samples should be prepared in case raters need more practice.

- **Sample score sheet**

A score sheet such as the one shown below that allows for up to three ratings

Booklet number	_____
1 st Read	
Rater ID	_____
Score	_____
2 nd Read	
Rater ID	_____
Score	_____
3 rd Read (if necessary)	
Rater ID	_____
Score	_____

Note: The sample score sheet provided is smaller than the original.

Training Procedures

Prior to the training session

- **Select raters**

Raters should be teachers or counselors familiar with the adult student population and trained in ESL instruction.

- **Prepare training materials**

Trainers must read through several writing samples to select papers appropriate for use in the training sets described above. If there is more than one trainer, the trainers should be in agreement on score assignments for all samples included in the sets.

Trainers should also note any issues or problems associated with a given task that may not be addressed in the rubric.

Training session

- **Present rubric**

Explain how the rubric is organized (see discussion above) and review definitions of task fulfillment and content development as well as examples of complex verb tenses and structures.

It is important to remind raters that writing samples are being scored holistically and that not all samples will exactly match the descriptors provided. Raters should be told that they will need to determine the descriptors that best fit the sample being scored as quickly as possible. If they have any questions during the training about application of the rubric, they should immediately ask a trainer.

- **Discuss writing task**

Provide raters with copies of the appropriate materials including the primary text, secondary text, writing prompt, and any reading comprehension questions associated with the primary text.

Raters must be familiar with the writing task as well as the context in which the task is embedded to determine the degree to which the test taker incorporates information from these sources in his or her response.

- **Review Set 1 (Anchor papers)**

Tell raters that Set 1 contains representative samples of each proficiency level in ascending order. Draw attention to language characteristics and degree of task fulfillment as they apply to each sample presented.

- **Rate Set 2 (Norming papers)**

Tell raters that Set 2 also contains representative samples that correspond to each proficiency level, but in this set they are presented in random order. Give raters a few minutes to assign scores to each sample in the set. When raters have finished, they should share the scores they assigned and any discrepancies should be discussed.

Note: Because this set contains one sample from each level, raters should be able to make decisions easily.

- **Rate Set 3 (Norming papers)**

Tell raters that Set 3 contains four samples, but that there is not necessarily a sample that corresponds to each level. Allow raters enough time to score each sample in the set. Ask raters to share the scores they assigned and lead a discussion to resolve any issues or discrepancies before continuing to the next set of samples.

- **Rate Set 4 (Norming papers)**

Follow the same procedures as Set 3 above.

By the time they finish Set 4, raters should feel comfortable with the rubric and its application. If not, it is best to practice scoring additional samples.

- **Discuss reliability issues**

Discuss reliability issues and procedures for monitoring both inter- and intra-rater reliability.

A procedure for checking rater reliability must be established by the core development team to ensure that raters apply the rubric consistently when scoring writing samples.

- **Review scoring procedures**

Explain that each sample is scored independently by two raters using numbers that correspond to Model Standards proficiency levels. (See Scoring GN Tasks in Writing Task Specifications.)

Refer to a sample score sheet and explain that the first rater indicates the test booklet number, rater ID (number or initials), and score assignment in the spaces provided.

To ensure that the second rater scores each sample without seeing the score of the first rater, the first rater folds the score sheet back such that first rater information cannot be seen (first rater information face down; second rater information face up) and attaches the score sheet the writing sample with a paper clip.

When the second rater receives the sample, he or she indicates rater ID and score assignment in the spaces provided. After scoring the sample, the second rater checks to see if the two scores are within one point. If the two scores are not within one point, a third rater scores the sample

providing the same information as the first and second raters. If a third rater is not available, the two raters discuss the sample and come to agreement about the score assignment.